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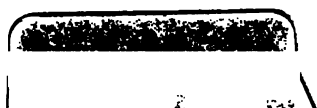
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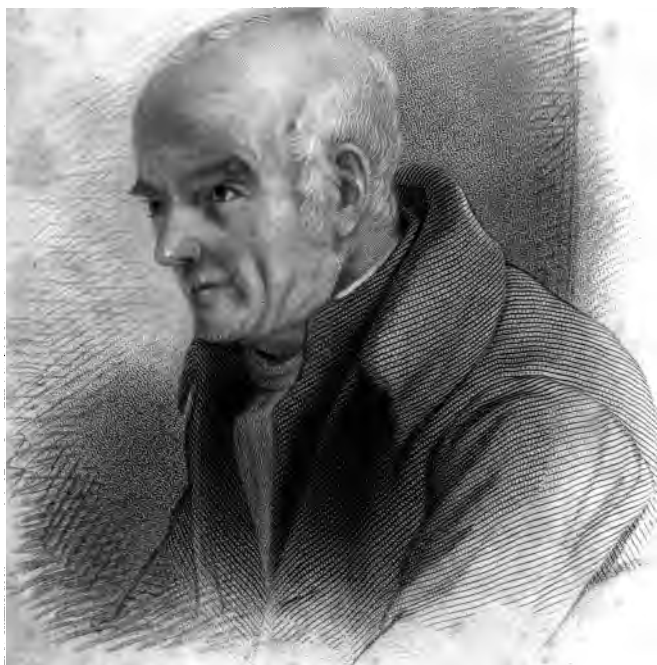
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THE
LIFE OF JAMES DAVIES.

LONDON:
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James Drouet





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THE
LIFE OF JAMES DAVIES,
A VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER.

WRITTEN
BY SIR THOMAS PHILLIPS.



SCHOOL HOUSE AT LLANGATTOCK-LINGOED.



LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.
MDCCCL.



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PREFACE.

THE life of a village teacher, is rarely presented to the general reader; and the ordinary career of a schoolmaster in humble life, affords but few materials for biography. It was, however, the lot of the subject of the present work, to acquire more fame than is usually attained by humble merit; and, before his own labours were terminated by death, several brief memoirs of his life were given to the world.

The first of those publications was called, *A Brief Memoir of James Davies, Master of the National School on Devauden Hill, Monmouthshire*; and consisted of a letter written in the year 1823, by the Rev. James Ashe Gabb to Miss Buchan. Mr. Gabb was appointed in 1817 to the curacy of Newchurch, a parish that comprises the Devauden Hill; and the acquaintance which he had formed with the village schoolmaster some years before, now ripened

into a friendship, which was not terminated by Mr. Gabb's relinquishment of that curacy, but continued until his death, in 1844.

The next edition of the brief memoir of James Davies, comprised as well the letter of 1823, as a second letter addressed in 1831 by the same writer to the same correspondent; and a dedication of the work to the then Bishop of Llandaff, Dr. Edward Copleston; who had been nominated to that see in 1828, and who had recommended the publication of both letters, from a conviction that they would tend to promote the cause of true religion and genuine charity.

Several editions of those letters were published between 1832 and 1839; and as the Devauden schoolmaster became thus widely known, considerable sums of money were contributed to further his benevolent labours at that place.

The original school-room, built for him in 1815, was licensed for religious worship; and, having received suitable additions, was converted into a chapel. Another school-room was erected, to which a residence for the master was attached; and endowments, which were contributed for



both chapel and school, were secured upon suitable investments.

In 1839 the publication was enlarged, by adding to the letters of Mr. Gabb, an account of the consecration of the Devauden chapel, written by that gentleman, as well as a short continuation of the memoir with some observations, from the pen of Bishop Copleston; and to this memoir was appended a tract by James Davies, called, *Recollections of the Last Days of William James*; the only production of his pen which has hitherto been made public. The memoir thus augmented in size and interest, was published in 1839, under the direction of the Committee of General Literature and Education, appointed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

A new edition of that work having been called for, it was republished in 1849, with a prefatory letter to the Rev. T. B. Murray, M.A. Secretary of the Society, from the Rev. James Endell Tyler, B.D. Canon of St. Paul's and Rector of St. Giles'-in-the-Fields; and in that edition a brief account was given of the removal

of the old man to Llangattock-Lingoed, the last scene of his earthly labours. Shortly before his death, when some one called his attention to a passage in the memoir of his life, he said he had never read the work; an indifference to the praise of men which is not very common.

On his death, in October 1849, the friends, who had encouraged his removal to Llangattock, and who regarded with grateful feelings the self-denying labours of his valuable life,—resolved to prepare for publication a more complete account than has yet appeared, of the actions of a man,—who loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. It was thought, in the first instance, that this might be done, by adding, to the memoir published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a continuation of his life from the year 1839, to his death at Llangattock; but on further reflection that plan was abandoned.

In a biography, events should be presented to the reader in something like chronological order; otherwise the formation of character will be imperfectly developed, and the interest and value of the narrative impaired.

The letters of Mr. Gabb were written under circumstances, which precluded systematic arrangement; and events were narrated by him, less in the order of their occurrence, than on account of their bearing on special and temporary objects, which have long received their accomplishment.

Those letters have however been largely employed in the present work; and in acknowledging my obligations to Mr. Gabb, I would bear witness to his services, not only as a Christian pastor, but as Secretary, for many years, to the District Committee, within the county of Monmouth, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

The preceding memoirs of James Davies have employed the pens of a bishop of the Church, a canon of our metropolitan cathedral, and a beneficed clergyman; each of whom in turn has described the actions, or delineated the character, of the Village Schoolmaster. The task of preparing for the press a more complete narrative of that good man's life, has now been committed to a layman; who owes to comparatively recent labours in promoting the

education of his countrymen, the gratifying distinction, of having his name associated with the humble teacher of the children of the poor.

The head of James Davies, contained in this work, has been engraved from the picture of the old man in the school-room at Devauden, which was painted for Bishop Copleston; and the wood-cuts have been prepared from drawings which I owe to the kindness of the Rev. Arthur Wyatt, Incumbent of Penrose.



BLAEN-TROTHY

LIFE OF JAMES DAVIES.

CHAPTER I.

GROSMONT.

Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least; else surely this man had not left
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
But as the mind was filled with inward light,
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.*

JAMES DAVIES was born on the 23rd day of August, A.D. 1765, in the parish of Grosmont, in the county of Monmouth; and in the register of baptisms in that parish for the next year, is the following entry, 'February the 10th, James, the son of Edward Davies, by Judith, his wife.'

* Since the passages from the *Excursion* have been extracted by me from that delightful work, William Wordsworth, the gifted poet and the humble Christian, has been released by death:

But he has left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

The parishes of Grosmont and Llangattock-Lingoed are separated by a rivulet called the Trothy, which rises in the parish of Grosmont, and, after pursuing a devious course, joins the Wye, near the town of Monmouth. Near the well-head of the stream is a farm-house called Blaen-Trothy, or the head of the Trothy, which was the residence of Edward Davies, who belonged to the class of tenant-farmers in a district, in which large tracts of land were often held by men of limited means.

The wife of Edward Davies was one of two daughters, the children of a farmer of the name of Ephraim Davis.* Dying in their infancy, his children were brought up by their maternal grandmother, who gave them a good education. One of those daughters, Elizabeth, married a person of the name of Williams, and has left descendants now living in and around the town of Abergavenny; and the other, Judith, became the wife of Edward Davies, to whom she was married on the 22nd of March 1754, at the parish church of Grosmont.

On her marriage she removed to Blaen-Trothy,

* In the register of the parish of Grosmont is the following entry:—‘Judith, the daughter of Ephraim Davis, baptized Dec. the 26th, 1729.’

where she lived until her husband's death, and where all their children were born. James, who was the fourth child, had a weakly body,—but he, nevertheless, attained old age, and survived all his brothers and sisters, save only one, Mary Marshall,—and she soon followed her brother to the grave, at the age of eighty-three.

In the early part of the last century, religious men, both amongst the clergy and laity, aided the efforts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to establish schools,—for the education of the children of the poor in the principles of the Christian religion, as it is professed and taught in the Church of England ; as well as—for their instruction in such other things as might qualify them for honest employments. The principality of Wales occupied a large share of the labours and anxieties of the Society ; and amongst its earliest members are found the names of men who belonged to that country.

Those efforts were regarded with distrust by statesmen and economists ; and the objections to the education of the poor, which were generally prevalent throughout much of the last century, impeded the establishment of Charity Schools—especially in rural districts, where the only education afforded was given in dame-

schools ; or by men who took to school-keeping after having failed in other occupations, and who had received no special training for the work they undertook.

In the boyhood of James Davies, a school was kept at the parish church of Llangattock-Lingoed, by a decayed farmer, named Thomas Evans, and another in the village of Grosmont, by a retired exciseman. After the death of James Davies, his surviving sister said that her brothers had gone to school at Grosmont, where they were taught to read write and cipher; but it is certain that he attended the school at Llangattock, which was nearer to his father's house than the village of Grosmont. In the last year of the old man's life, whilst himself keeping school at Llangattock, he pointed out spots in the churchyard where he had sat down when a boy at school; and there still lives an aged yeoman who remembers James Davies, in his way to the school at Llangattock, passing by the house in which the old man yet dwells.

His school learning was very limited, and to the close of life he spelt many common words inaccurately; but he read well, wrote a legible hand, and could teach the elementary rules of arithmetic. Of his school teachers nothing is *remembered*; and those early impressions by

which character is determined, were derived from his mother.

Judith Davies is described, by those neighbours by whom she is remembered, as a proud high-stomached woman,—tenacious of what she conceived to be her rights, and disposed to assert them in an imperious manner. By her descendants, however, her memory is regarded with affection, for—the care with which she cultivated the minds of her children, the firmness with which she resisted oppression, and the self-respect she maintained in adversity. She instructed her children in the Holy Scriptures, encouraging them by small presents to commit suitable portions to memory; and it was her habit to require them to repeat to her—on Wednesdays and Fridays, the Church Catechism—and on Sundays and festival days appointed by the Church to be kept holy, the collects or prayers appropriate to such occasions.

Her son James had thus known the Holy Scriptures from a child; and the earliest manifestations of the boy's character which are now remembered, consist,—in the regularity of his attendance on the public worship of the Church, the gravity of his deportment in the house of God, and the distinctness with which he joined in the responses appointed to be said by the

congregation—a duty then, as now, very commonly neglected.

Blaen-Trothy, where the family resided, is distant eight miles from the market town of Abergavenny; and in the boyhood of James Davies, there dwelt in that town a first cousin of his father, who followed with success the profession of an attorney. That gentleman, whose name was Barnard Davies, preserved friendly relations with his cousin, and offered to receive one of the boys into his office. The elder sons were hale and lusty, and for them the farm afforded appropriate occupation; but James was a feeble and sickly boy, unequal to hard labour, and, without regard to his own inclinations, he was converted into a lawyer's clerk, and placed in the office of a country solicitor in large practice.

It is not known, at what age he left his father's house, or how long he continued in the office of his relative; but it is certain that before he was fourteen he had relinquished an occupation, for which he conceived a great distaste.

The gentle nature of the boy may have been unsuited to the struggles and sufferings, which the lawyer in large practice is compelled to witness from day to day. Through life, the man regarded the practice of the law with dislike;

and not long before his death, when told by a relative that she had placed her son in the office of an attorney, he expressed his sorrow that she had chosen for her child an employment, calculated to make him worldly-minded—all lawyers, as he believed, being fond of money.

The immediate occasion of his abrupt abandonment of the law is thus related.

Meeting, in one of the streets of Abergavenny, an old woman who knew his father, she thus accosted the boy:—‘Jamie Davies, why did your father, who is an honest man, put you to a lawyer? No lawyer goes to heaven.’

The boy was so much frightened at the picture of the future thus presented to him, that he forsook his master’s office without making his departure known, and travelled to Bristol, distant forty miles from his home, where he remained for three weeks before the place of his sojourn was discovered.

On his return to his father’s house he sickened of scarlet fever; and before he recovered, his father was attacked by that disease, and died in the month of July, 1779.

The eldest son, Edward, retained the farm at Blaen-Trothy, and the mother removed to a small farm in the neighbourhood, called Little Camp-

ston. Edward Davies kept his father's stock, except four cows and a few articles of furniture and farming implements, which were obtained by the widow as her share of the property of her husband.

She was accompanied by two of her children, of whom James was one, and Sarah, his youngest sister, who is said to have most resembled him in character, was the other.*

When the eldest brother retained the stock at Blaen-Trothy, he agreed to pay a small sum of money to each of his brothers and sisters ; but he wrongfully withheld their little inheritance, and left them to struggle with the world, under a painful sense of early injustice.

James Davies continued a feeble youth, unable to undertake laborious occupation ; and he apprenticed himself, soon after his father's death, to a weaver, named John Jacob, who pursued that humble calling in the village of Grosmont.

For fifteen years he continued to work at

* Sarah Davies married Robert Thorley, and went to live at the Wern, in Skenfreth, and here her mother, Judith Davies, died in 1798. Sarah Thorley has left daughters, one of whom is named Judith, after her grandmother, and with her James Davies kept up a *correspondence* in after life.

the loom; first as an apprentice, and afterwards as a journeyman, residing for the whole of that time in or near Grosmont: and although he must have been then acquiring, that firmness of purpose, and those habits of self-denial, which so remarkably distinguished his character, scarcely any incidents are known of this period of his life.

In his twenty-third year he received confirmation at the hands of Bishop Watson,—renewing in the presence of God, and the church, the solemn promise and vow which were made for him in his baptism. The ordinance of confirmation exercised an important influence on his after life, and allusion will be made in the next chapter, to the impressions which were then awakened in his mind, and the labours to which those impressions contributed.

Men, who arrogate to themselves purity of motive, are not slow to attribute hypocrisy or baseness to others; and it was the lot of James Davies to be suspected and reproached in early life, by those who understood not his character, and were unable to appreciate his conduct.

In the year 1795, being then thirty years of age, he rented part of a cottage, of which a woman of the name of Elizabeth Roberts, who

earned a livelihood by baking and selling gingerbread, was the owner and occupier; and here he set up a loom, and worked at his trade of a weaver.

The Grosmont register records, that, on the 16th day of August 1796, James Davies and Elizabeth Roberts were married by banns, with consent of friends; and amongst the burials for the year 1801, is found the following entry:—
'Jan. 17. Elizabeth Davies.'

With but few of those to whom he became known in after life, did the good man ever discourse on this passage of his history; and that blessing which, Izaak Walton says, was denied to meek Moses, to patient Job, and to the meek and patient Richard Hooker, was also withheld from the humble and self-denying James Davies.

It is certain that he did not secure a happy home, and he is said to have absented himself from his wife for a month at a time, and to have thus begun that wandering life, which will be described in the ensuing chapter. Whether his wife proved that clamorous woman described by the Jewish preacher; or whether his own temper, naturally infirm, was the cause of this disunion; or whether both parties were to blame, I have no sufficient materials to deter-



mine. The wife is known to have complained of her husband's conduct, to a neighbouring magistrate, who, on remonstrating with the meek man, was assured by him that women were full of deceit.

On the wife's death, James Davies sold the cottage in which they had lived. His mother had died in 1798, and no living link remained to connect him with the place of his birth ; which ceased from this time to be his home, and which he rarely visited afterwards, until the close of his life. He evinced feelings of grateful and affectionate respect for the memory of his mother : he owed to her, much of his strength of character, and some of that infirmity of temper, which was never altogether overcome ; and eminently useful as was his life, much of its value was derived from the pious teaching of a religious mother.

Early had he learned,
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die.
Thus the foundations of his mind were laid ;
While yet a child, he had perceived the presence
And the power of goodness.

CHAPTER II.

USK.

An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
A vagrant merchant with a heavy load
Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest ;
Yet do such travellers find their own delight ;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
Gained merited respect in simpler times ;
When squire, and priest, and those who round them
dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR's toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.

THE history of the patriarch Joseph was often present to the thoughts of James Davies ; and when in after-life he regarded the circumstances of his early years, and the events by which he had been constrained to leave the scenes of his infancy and boyhood, this humble servant of God thus acknowledged, in language of pious gratitude, the merciful dealings of his heavenly Father.

‘How various are the ways of the Lord God Almighty in the workings of his providence with man-

kind; how mysterious are his doings with his fallen creatures in the distribution of his grace; all ending in one grand design—the good of his people and the salvation of souls. Joseph's brethren, harbouring in their hearts envy, hatred, and malice against their innocent and unoffending brother, sold him a bond slave into Egypt: but God Almighty, that brings good out of evil, overruled their malice to accomplish his intentions of mercy. Joseph is sent into Egypt, to save the lives of his father and his brethren, together with the inhabitants of Egypt and the surrounding countries. In looking back on many circumstances that have happened in the course of my life, which gave me much sorrow and deep affliction at the time of their happening, I can now look back upon them all, and rejoice and thank God for every one of them: they were all necessary, not one too much, and God in mercy permitted me to be exercised with them. For although I hope that when I was young (and it is with deep humility I say it) I had a small measure of the grace of God, yet there was much that was amiss, much that wanted to be amended,—pride, stubbornness, and self-will to be subdued; and perhaps one of the most difficult duties the Christian has to perform, is to set his affections on things above, to wean them from the transitory pleasures of time, and to rely for the accomplishing of this—wholly and solely—on the power of sovereign grace. For many years I have been endeavouring to perform this important duty; yet what am I now,—a poor unworthy sinner. Upon the strictest examination I can place no hope of acceptance with God, no hope of eternal life, in anything I ever did, or am doing at the present, or ever hope to do. I feel I am imperfect; sin is mixed with all; and my hopes are on the rich, the free, the unmerited mercies of God in Christ Jesus. But lest any persons should be led to

make a perverse use of the unbounded mercies of the Saviour, and feel easy in their sins, I beg to assure all such that it is my prayer to God, the desire of my heart, and endeavour of my life, to do the will of God, to keep his holy commandments and righteous laws, to hate and detest every sin,—all that is hateful and abominable in his pure and holy sight. For how can I hope for any share in the mercies of the Saviour, if I live in the commission of those sins that crucified my Redeemer, and nailed him to the cross, and the commission of which he has declared will shut us out of heaven, and sink us into the abyss of eternal and everlasting misery. ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.’—Matt. vii. 21—23.’

These reflections on his life, and on the merciful dealings of his heavenly Father with his lowly and loving child, form a portion of a work written by him in 1839; but they seem to have a special relation to the period at which we have now arrived, when, in 1801, soon after his wife’s death, James Davies left the village of Grosmont to seek another home. The occupation of a weaver was not well suited to a bodily frame, which long manifested consumptive tendencies; and the toil and exhaus-

tion of severe bodily labour, could be ill sustained by a fragile constitution and feeble health.

The occupation of a travelling pedlar was that in which he now engaged, and the choice marks the justness of view and humility of temper, by which he was characterised.

Descended from yeomen, possessing some school learning, manifesting a taste for intellectual enjoyments, distinguished by that true refinement which springs from native gentleness of character—he joined to those qualities, that really Christian view of man's position in the world, which regards labour as honourable, no matter how humble, or even degrading in the estimate of a luxurious age, may be the employment.

Whilst pursuing his itinerant occupation, he made his home at the picturesque little town of Usk, of which the following description is given by that quaint old writer, Thomas Churchyard, in 'The Worthines of Wales.'

A pretie towne, calde Oske, neere Ragglan stands,
A river there doth beare the self-same name:
His christall streames, that runnes along the sands,
Shewes that it is a river of great fame.
Fresh water sweete this goodly river yeelds,
And when it swels it spreads ore all the feedls:
Great store of fish is caught within this flood,
That doth indeed both towne and countrey good.

A castle there in Oske doth yet remaine,
A seat where kings and princes have been borne :
It stands full ore a goodly pleasant plaine,
The walls whereof, and towers are all to torne,
(With wether's blast, and tyme that weares all out :)
And yet it hath a fayre prospect about:
Trim meades and walkes along the river's side,
With bridge well built, the force of flood to bide.

From Usk he made his circuits through the adjoining country, carrying in his basket the ordinary furniture of a pedlar's store, and collecting rags, which he disposed of at paper mills at no great distance from that town. Relieved from that confinement at the loom, which was not only irksome but injurious to his health ; freed, too, from severe bodily toil, the indications of disease which his constitution had presented, disappeared : and constant exercise in the open air, joined to a spare and frugal diet, and uniform temperance in all things, strengthened a bodily frame naturally feeble, and prolonged to old age a life of active usefulness and continued self-denial.

To this period of his life, and to the wandering habits by which it was characterised, he was indebted for an extensive acquaintance with the poor, and for some of that never-failing sympathy in their privations, which formed so prominent a feature of his benevolent character. *The experience of the world and the world's*

ways, the knowledge of men and things, the chastened habits, the sagacity, and, above all, the will to do and suffer for others, which, as we proceed, will become apparent in the subject of this memoir, are described, in the *Excursion*, in language which is most appropriate to his character; and the passage of that poem which is given below might have been written for his life:—

Much did he see of men,
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language. In the woods
A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
The better portion of his time; and there
Spontaneously had his affections thriven
Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
And liberty of nature; there he kept
In solitude and solitary thought,
His mind in a just equipoise of love.
Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
By partial bondage. In his steady course
No piteous revolutions had he felt,
No wild varieties of joy and grief.
Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
His heart lay open; and by nature tuned
And constant disposition of his thoughts
To sympathy with man, he was alive

To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
And all that was endured; for, in himself
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
He had no painful pressure from without
That made him turn aside from wretchedness
With coward fears. He could afford to suffer
With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
That in our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life.

Inflexible integrity in his dealings with others, great benevolence of character, constant attendance on religious worship, and a careful and reverent observance of established ordinances, marked his conduct, and won the esteem and respect of all to whom he became known. His demeanour at church attracted notice, from the devotional manner with which he repeated the responses aloud, whilst all around him were silent. He gave glory to God by joining in the services of the Church, and partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and by loving and serving his fellow-men: ever evincing, in his life and conduct, an abiding sense of the apostle's declaration, that 'pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' Incessant application to the duties of his humble calling was joined to the most

unsparing self-denial, and both were under the guidance of much natural good sense. Whilst pursuing the life of an itinerant pedlar, he occupied lodgings ; but after some years had been thus spent, he rented a house, in which he carried on the business of a retail dealer, embracing that variety of articles, which are commonly sold by the shopkeeper of a small town ; and he followed this occupation until the year 1812. He was for several years a householder, and when he no longer bore a pedlar's pack, he supplied to other wayfaring dealers their itinerant stores, and bought from them the rags which they had collected.

In his shop he sold corn flour and rice, to the poor, at less than the ordinary market price ; and after he had given up his shop, he provided for them flour, which he warehoused and sold, first in his room, and afterwards in his school, until the period of his quitting Usk, for the Devauden.

The harvest of 1809 was most disastrous. Heavy rains, which began in July, continued with occasional intermission until October, and whilst the average price of wheat was in December 102s. a quarter, the best samples sold in Mark Lane for 125s.

Prices continued to rise in 1810, and in the

month of August of that year the average price of wheat was 116s. a quarter.

The scarcity and dearness of provisions were productive of extensive suffering at Usk, which James Davies resolved to mitigate; and his conduct on that occasion is thus described by the Rev. James Ashe Gabb:—

About twenty-one or twenty-two years ago, there was a great and distressing scarcity of wheat throughout the kingdom. At Usk, where James Davies then resided, the price of flour was at first twenty-five shillings, and afterwards attained to thirty shillings a bushel, and the lower order of people suffered very severely. He witnessed the present state of suffering, and dreading greater evils, took upon himself to state his opinion to some leading persons in the town, urging them to enter into a subscription to lay in a store of flour, and to retail it at reduced prices. He met with no encouragement from them, or rather what he heard would have discouraged any man, who was not earnestly bent upon an object. It remained for him either to abandon his project, or to carry it on upon his own responsibility and at his own risk. He adopted the latter alternative, and ingratiated himself with a merchant at Chepstow, who consigned to him a load of flour. Thus he laid in a small store, and renewed it, from time to time, as occasion demanded.

By these means he supplied the town and neighbourhood with flour, dealing it out with his own hands at twenty-two shillings per bushel, from the month of November to August in the following year, while the market price was from twenty-five to thirty shillings. He counted his own time and trouble as nothing, and in *this way sold* 1200 bushels and upwards.

Happily he saved himself from loss, except in one

unfortunate branch of the speculation; and he conferred incalculable benefit on the poor. Even at the present day, his exertions in this affair are spoken of with grateful remembrance.*

One who knew him in after-life, pointed to the love of money, as a marked feature of his character; but his carefulness of the things of this world was one manifestation, amongst many, of devotedness to his Master's service. This was shown in the diligent employment of every opportunity of usefulness, which was afforded by his humble calling and limited means.

In connexion with this transaction, an incident occurred, which manifested the promptness of temper, that is so often the infirmity of ardent minds, and is perhaps inseparable from the earnestness of purpose, that constitutes much of the value of such characters.

A farmer, who was his first cousin, (the son of his mother's sister,) lived in the parish of Llantilio-Pertholey; where he and his mother, who had survived her sister, were occasionally visited by our benevolent friend. Whilst he was supplying flour to the poor, he made a journey to Llantilio, in the expectation that he could prevail on his cousin to lend him 50*l.* to purchase

* Mr. Gabb's letter of October 31st, 1831.

a larger store of flour, and thus extend his charitable labours. There seemed to the practical and provident farmer, who carefully husbanded his savings, something so strange in the plans of one, whom he had come to regard as a benevolent enthusiast, that he refused the loan.

For many years after this occurrence, James Davies ceased to visit his cousin; and it was not before the latter was borne to the house of all living, that the offence was entirely obliterated from the memory of the survivor. In one of his visits to Llantilio, he was pained by witnessing—what was then usual in country churchyards—the playing of ball against the north wall of the church; a practice which he regarded as destructive of that reverence for sacred things, which was implanted in his character, and was manifested in an age when irreverence was extensively prevalent. He thereupon addressed a letter to the parish clergyman, entreating, with affectionate earnestness, that he would employ his authority to put a stop to a practice, which must conduce to irreverence, and was often productive of serious disorder and gross profanity.

The importance of early religious teaching had been long present to his mind; and in that dedication of his future life to the education

of the children of the poor, on which he now resolved,—those hopes and wishes were realized which he had formed at his confirmation, when he ratified before the church, the promises which were made for him in baptism.

That event occurred in the year 1788, when Bishop Watson visited the see of Llandaff, and having confirmed above a thousand persons, delivered to each a small tract, which was entitled, *An Address to Young Persons after Confirmation*. The following extract on this subject is taken from a work entitled, *Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, written by himself at different intervals*. Vol. i. p. 323 :—

I was sensible that I might have found a more valuable present, than that which I then gave to the young persons of my diocese; but I flattered myself, that the circumstance of its being composed purposely for their benefit, by the bishop who confirmed them, would give it, in their estimation, a degree of merit to which it might not otherwise be entitled.

In one instance, probably in many, the seed thus sown fell into good ground; and the importance attributed by the bishop to early education, and to the office of a schoolmaster, produced abiding impressions upon James Davies, who ever afterwards cherished the desire to aid

in training up the young of the Christian flock in the ways and works of godliness.

A strong affection for children, and an earnest longing that they should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, were strongly manifested during his itinerant career; and are often mentioned by those who remember his wanderings from door to door.

A man who is now a farm bailiff in the neighbourhood of Usk, was taken from his parents, placed at school, and supported by James Davies at that period of his life. This man, now fifty years of age, says, he supposes he was a wicked boy, because the old man often chastised him roughly, although he always caressed him afterwards. James Davies never forgot those whom he had once served, and, shortly before the close of his own life, he sent to his former scholar a present of religious books.

An aged woman, who remembers the visits of the old man to her cottage, with thread and tape and handkerchiefs, speaks with regret of her husband's refusal to allow him to bring up their son, a boy of seven years of age, which he offered to do; and she recollects, that he then brought up two boys who lived with him at Usk, and who were afterwards apprenticed by him,

one to a shoemaker, and the other to a shop-keeper.

The possession of a fixed idea often works out the realization of its own cherished hopes ; and events were at hand, which changed the daily routine of the life of James Davies, when his age was over forty-five years. Public attention had been strongly directed to the necessity for increased exertions on the part of the church, in educating the children of the poor, when, in 1811, Dr. Herbert Marsh, afterwards Bishop of Llandaff, preached the anniversary sermon at the meeting of the children of the charity schools of the metropolis, in St. Paul's Cathedral. The preacher ably enforced the duty imposed on a national church, to make adequate provision for educating the people in a religious spirit ; exhibited the provision made by the reformers of our ecclesiastical system, for erecting the superstructure of national education on the foundation of the national religion ; and counselled the members of the church, to engage in no plan of education of which the institutions of the church were not essential elements.

In October of the same year, 'The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church,

throughout England and Wales,' was established; and the impulse thus given was soon manifested, in the improvement of old, and the foundation of new schools.

In June 1812, some friends of the religious education of the poor resolved to establish a school at Usk; and James Davies, the most zealous promoter of the good work, proposed to accept the office of master, to which he was appointed on the 1st July 1812, with a salary of 30*l.* per annum, and was requested to repair immediately to Bristol, to be instructed in his duties.

Soon after this time, a parochial school was established at Abergavenny; and on the 14th May 1813, the Usk School Committee directed James Davies to proceed without loss of time to Abergavenny, to perfect himself for the situation of master of the Usk school.

He went to Abergavenny, where he received the requisite preparatory instruction, and was then first introduced to the Rev. James Ashe Gabb, who thus speaks of him:—

His remarkable simplicity, zeal, and assiduity attracted my particular notice. In a few weeks he left Abergavenny for the school at Usk, which in a measure originated with him, and to which he was a liberal subscriber.

That school he conducted for three or four years, to

the entire satisfaction of all the subscribers, and to the evident improvement of the poor, both parents and children. There he might have ended his days ; but with him, it was but a little step towards a wider field of usefulness.*

The following resolutions, extracted from the minutes of the Usk School Committee, show the estimation in which his labours were there regarded:—

1813: *Oct. 27.* That the Committee, having this day examined the progress of the scholars, and the internal management and regulation of the school, highly approve of the same, and consider the care, diligence, and attention of Mr. James Davies, the master, highly deserving their praise.

1814: *July 6.* That a Prayer-book, not exceeding one guinea in value, be presented to the master, Mr. James Davies, with a suitable inscription thereon, as a token of approval of his conduct in the management of the school.

1815: *August 1.* That the late master, Mr. James Davies, is entitled to the thanks of the subscribers and society in general, for his assiduous attention in the management of the school, and the correct state of the same at the time of his recession.

From the government of his school, corporal punishment was not excluded. He never flinched from the practical recognition of the maxim of Solomon, that ‘He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him

* *Mr. Gabb's letter of August 5th, 1823.*

betimes.' Yet although his punishments were sometimes severe, his affections were so ardent that he always enjoyed the strong and abiding attachment of his scholars.

A lady, of whom inquiries were made for some account of his early years, says:—

I knew our good old friend when I was very young, and I can well remember the respect I felt for him when he carried a basket. I also remember his stroking my face, and telling me to be a good girl—that 'God loved good children'—at the same time giving me a thimble out of his basket. Many years afterwards, I went to see him in his school-room at Usk, where he showed me a basket suspended from the top of the room, in which the children were lifted up, as a punishment for misconduct. This, he said, he disliked very much, because it made the children sick.*

When the school at Usk had been established on a satisfactory basis, James Davies left Usk to settle at the Devauden. His pupils accompanied their kind master on his journey; and their separation from each other took place on the public road, where he kissed and blessed those little ones who were now to lose an affectionate friend; and whilst we leave them on their homeward path, we shall follow him to a new field of labour.

* This punishment is said to have been practised by *Joseph Lancaster*.

CHAPTER III.

DEVAUDEN.

The discipline of slavery is unknown
Among us—hence the more do we require
The discipline of virtue ; order else
Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
Thus, duties rising out of good possest,
And prudent caution, needful to avert
Impending evil, equally require
That the whole people should be taught and trained.

THE religion of James Davies did not consist in vague speculations or barren theories, but was eminently practical : he did not substitute for the duties of home or of neighbourhood, the more exciting claims presented by strange people and distant climes ; nor, whilst regarding with affectionate interest, the labours of Christian teachers in heathen lands, was he unmindful of those little ones at home, who, having been received at baptism into the congregation of Christ's flock, and grafted into the body of His visible Church, are, nevertheless, allowed to grow up in ignorance of God's word, and accustomed to profane His holy name.

Active benevolence, great humility, uncommon self-denial, and dread of a worldly mind and temper, were prominent features of his character; and those qualities, joined to a determination to regard nothing but his Master's service, led to his removal, in 1815, from Usk to the Devauden, where his name and labours will long be remembered.

In the reign of Henry the Eighth, a portion of the marches within the dominion of Wales, called Gwent by the early inhabitants, was constituted an English county, to which the name of Monmouth was assigned by an Act of the Parliament of England. It is encompassed by four rivers—the Monnow, the Wye, the Severn, and the Rhymney; and is traversed throughout its whole extent by the Usk. On the eastern side of this district, the old red sandstone formation rises into heights of considerable elevation, which extend from the neighbourhood of Monmouth towards Chepstow, and are prolonged westerly in the direction of Newport. The ascent of these hills is abrupt and fatiguing; but their summits present views of remarkable richness, extent, and variety. Woods of almost unequalled beauty recall the memory of vast forests, by which the country was formerly covered; and of which the most remarkable,

Wentwood, still of considerable extent, once belonged to the native princes of Gwent, and continued a royal possession until the reign of Charles the Second, when it was granted to the second Marquis of Worcester; by whose descendants it has since been holden. These forests influenced, doubtless, the character of the native population in past times, and may have contributed to some of the peculiarities by which it is distinguished in our own. That population consists principally of small farmers, quarrymen, wood-cutters and colliers, mule-drivers, and labourers, many of whom have reared their cottages amidst the woods, or upon the commons; and, by great toil and perseverance, have cleared the ground from stones, furze, and heath. Those men hold their cottages and the small enclosures by which they are surrounded, of the Duke of Beaufort as lord of the manor, at moderate rents, usually on life leases. Accustomed to scanty fare, inured to poverty, suffering occasionally from cold and hunger, and exposed to peculiar temptations, they have been accused of dishonest practices, and of those acts of petty fraud, which often prevail amidst such a population.

In the course of his wanderings as a pedlar, and of his journeys to the neighbouring paper-mills to *sell the rags* which he had collected;

James Davies had often traversed the parishes of New Church and Kilgwrrwg, which occupy the summit as well as the slopes of the ridge, at the point, where the road from Monmouth branches off, in one direction by St. Arvans towards Chepstow, and in another through Wentwood towards Newport. In those excursions, much had met his eye which left indelible impressions on his heart. He was deeply affected by the wants of the poor, and the ignorance and immoral habits in which their children grew up to manhood. The Devauden is within the parish of New Church, near the summit of the ridge, at a considerable distance from the parish church. This spot excited, in an especial manner, his zealous sympathies; because here the cottagers seemed to him—to be living without God, to be deprived of all outward means of religious improvement, and to possess minds as uncultivated as their own hills.

The stated service of the parish church was never performed more frequently than once a fortnight, and six weeks were often allowed to elapse without the attendance of a clergyman. If, to the intelligent Christian, an unfrequent or irregular attendance on religious worship be productive of many and great dangers, what

must have been the effect of so serious a violation of ecclesiastical order, and abandonment of ministerial duty, on this uneducated people, unable themselves to read the holy Scriptures? The last command of the Saviour of the world, recorded by the beloved apostle, is, 'Feed my sheep;' and St. Peter, to whom that solemn charge was addressed, in the first of his Epistles, written not long before his own death, exhorts elders to 'Feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.' Solemn words, sadly forgotten in past times; often unheeded in our own.

In a spot less remote from a portion of the Devauden-hill than the parish church, stands the church of the adjoining parish of Kilgwrrwg; and here some of the natives of the Devauden had been accustomed occasionally to assemble for public worship. When, however, James Davies first became acquainted with that district, and trod the secluded ways, by which the parish of Kilgwrrwg is traversed, the little church was in decay; rain and snow penetrated through the roof into the body of the building; and a neighbouring farmer folded his sheep within the walls of God's

house. On twelve Sundays in the year, and on those only, was public worship performed in that church ; and on those occasions, the accumulated filth of sheep and other cattle was shovelled out on the day before. It is even said that this had been done on the morning of the Lord's-day. The shattered reading-desk was unprovided with either a Bible or a Prayer-book, both of which were borrowed for use at a neighbouring farm-house ; whilst clerical vestments were dispensed with, in the performance of public worship, as well as in the celebration of the offices of the Church.

Wants unheeded by others were deeply felt by the kind-hearted pedlar, who earnestly prayed that the Lord would open some door of mercy to those who were suffering a famine, not of bread or of water, but of God's word ; and to whom might be applied the language of the prophet, ' My flock was scattered, and none did search or seek after them.'

At length, however, a zealous, active, and most useful clergyman was appointed to the cure of souls in these two parishes, in which the ministrations of religion had been long sadly neglected. It was in the year 1811, that this gentleman, the Rev. William Jones, was appointed stipendiary

curate of Kilgwrrwg, the population of which was 133 persons ; and, in 1813, he was appointed to the curacy of Newchurch, the population of which amounted to 688 persons.

In South Wales the influence of the Church has been weakened and its efficiency impaired, by reason of the scanty incomes of the clergy ; and whilst we proclaim the past neglect of those, to whom in former times the spiritual charge of Newchurch and Kilgwrrwg was entrusted—it should in fairness be told that the income of the benefice of Kilgwrrwg, at the time to which this narrative refers, was only £57.

The ministrations of Mr. Jones seem to have early attracted the regards of James Davies, who frequently attended the services of Kilgwrrwg church, walking there for that purpose from Usk, a distance of several miles. An intimacy soon grew up between these zealous men ; and there are grounds for believing, that, even before his appointment to the school at Usk, James Davies had intimated to Mr. Jones his willingness to remove to the Devauden, which presented a central position for a school, and to undertake the office of schoolmaster, in case a building could be raised, and a small stipend provided for the support of the master.

The education of the poor was at that time regarded with distrust by many, with aversion by some, and for a long time no suitable site could be obtained for a school-room; but the difficulties, which were experienced in that respect, were gradually surmounted; and after several delays, by which the patience and temper of those zealous and benevolent men were sorely tried, a plot of land, sufficient for a school-room and small garden, was obtained from the late Duke of Beaufort, who granted it on lease to trustees, amongst whom were Mr. Jones and James Davies.

Sufficient funds to provide a suitable building having been collected, a school-room was erected, which would accommodate one hundred and twenty children. In faith the foundation was laid, in hope the superstructure was raised, and by charity it was first projected, and has been since supported.

It was in the summer of 1815 that James Davies removed from Usk to the Devauden, and received the charge of rude, ragged, and boisterous mountain children, whom he long instructed by precept and example.

The income of his former school was fixed at £30, and was paid with regularity. At the Devauden his receipts were fluctuating, not unfre-



INTERIOR OF DEVAUDEN SCHOOL-ROOM.

quently falling short of £15, and after some years' service fixed at £20 ; which continued to be the stipend, until twenty years of labour had been ungrudgingly rendered, when an endowment was provided for the school, by the contributions of the public.

On this, as on all occasions of his life, he discarded every selfish consideration, and cheerfully exchanged the certain income which he enjoyed at Usk, for the uncertainty and anxieties of a precarious income.

The school-room formed his dwelling throughout the day, his chamber at night ; and in that room he long instructed from eighty to one hundred children, to whom there was an occasional accession of numbers from adult scholars.

The daily business of his school was invariably opened and closed with prayer, accompanied by the reading of a portion of the Holy Scriptures. In prayer, he offered his supplications to the Giver of all good, with that simplicity which formed so marked a portion of his character ; and when reading in the school-room some suitable portion of the sacred volume, his explanations were not only peculiarly suited to the capacity of the scholars, but might have been heard with profit, and must have been listened to

with interest, by adult and educated Christians. The attention of the children was very striking; but earnestness and kindness always arouse and interest youthful minds.

On the Lord's day, the children were all required to attend the Sunday-school; and it was a goodly sight when they went forth to the house of God, led by their grey-headed master, who arranged them in their proper places at church, where their conduct was orderly and attentive. Everything, indeed, bore witness to the religious principles, on which their education was founded, and by which the instruction given to them was characterized. His love for his scholars, and anxiety for their welfare, resembled that of a good father for his own children.

The parents of many who attended his school were very poor, and the little ones were sometimes sent from their homes without a breakfast. If to the inquiry, 'Have you had your breakfast, my dear?' the answer should be 'No,' a portion of the master's humble store—sometimes all he had at hand, it might be the meal intended for himself—was bestowed upon the hungry child.

The school, however, was not the only object of his care. He administered to the bodily and spiritual wants of his sick and infirm neighbours;

and the pastor, when visiting his flock, often heard of the distribution of food and wine and money by the hands of the village schoolmaster ; —who, by his personal visits to the abodes of sickness or destitution, smoothed the pillow of suffering, and often made the widow's heart to sing for joy. This relief was administered at his own proper charges, although, in a few instances, his recommendations may have ensured, to some of the objects of his regard, the bounty of others. His own meal has been often given to the hungry, and in the excessive cold of a severe winter, the blankets have been removed from his bed to the cottage of a poor neighbour, at whose hands he had experienced ingratitude and unkindness. His charities were not limited to his own neighbourhood or country.

The subject of missions to the heathen, and the missionary labours of the Church, were introduced to his notice in May, 1820, by the Rev. James Ashe Gabb, who was then engaged in soliciting subscriptions to the Church Missionary Society, and who left for the schoolmaster's perusal, such addresses and papers, as would enable him to understand the extent, variety, and importance of the society's operations. On the following morning, when Mr.

Gabb was at breakfast, James Davies presented himself at that gentleman's house at St. Arvans, having left his own home, three miles distant, at an early hour, in order that he might return in time to open the school. He at once perceived that the friends of missions were pursuing objects for which he had often supplicated when joining in the prayers of the Church,—expressed the strong interest he felt in the operations of the society,—and intimated his determination to contribute 12s. yearly, besides a weekly subscription of 1d., and to collect what he could from his neighbours. From that time, he read missionary papers to those who were grown up, and to them, as well as to the children of his school, he contrasted the light and privileges which they enjoyed, with the darkness by which the heathen world was afflicted, and amidst which men and women and children are daily hurried from time into eternity.

At the end of the first year, he took to Mr. Gabb his own contribution of 12s., as well as 15s. which he had collected from his neighbours, and 20s., or thereabouts, subscribed by the children of his school. The good man then said to Mr. Gabb, 'I have got, sir, a trifle more,' producing what proved to be a five-pound note.

Mr. Gabb's hesitation to receive so large a sum at his hands was met by the reply, 'Sir, I only regret that I cannot give a larger sum to such a blessed work, but the little business at Kilgwrrwg church has lessened my power for this year.'

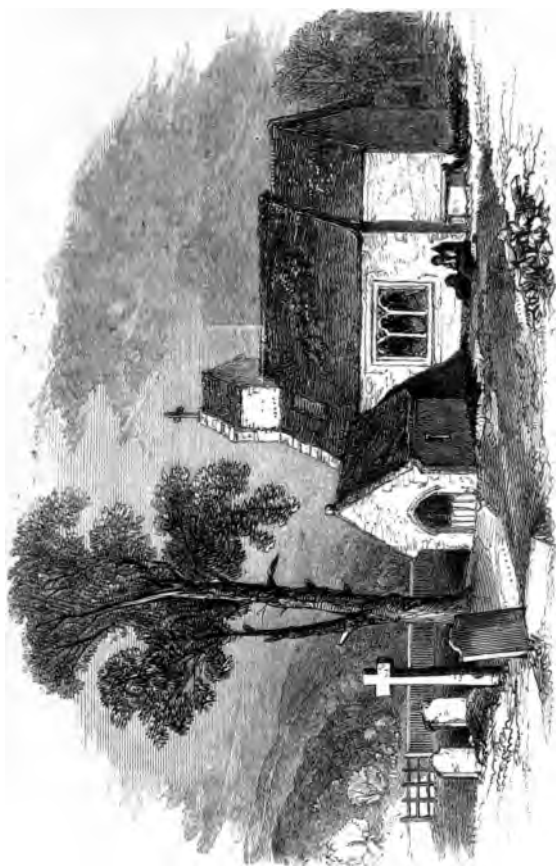
The following year he appeared with his collection as before, but his own trifle, as he again called it, was £10. After this, several of his subscribers withdrew their support, but he engaged to make up the deficiency, and became answerable for £2 12s. yearly, a sum which entitled him to receive a Monthly Register. To this he added a five-pound note; and when Mr. Gabb counselled prudence and moderation, and reminded him of the many local claims upon his bounty, his only reply was, 'It is the work of God,—can I do too much for him? I thank God for putting it in my heart, and also for giving me an ability to do this.'

Besides these contributions to one society, he subscribed to the Moravian Missions, and to the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, and supplied his neighbours with copies of the Holy Scriptures, distributing them to some gratuitously, and selling them to others at reduced prices.

His reverence for God's house led him to

undertake the reparation of Kilgwrrwg church. By repeated importunities, the parishioners were prevailed upon to repair and ceil the roof, which was open to the tiles, through which the rain and snow were driven into the church,—as well as to fit up the building with pews, benches, and a reading-desk. James Davies not only contributed voluntarily to that portion of the work which the parish agreed to execute, but laid out an additional sum of £30 to provide things decent and fitting for the solemnization of divine worship. He found the communion table without a railing or cover, the pavement rough and uneven, and the eastern window so small as to admit but little light, whilst the church accommodation was very limited. He provided for the table of the Lord an appropriate covering of velvet,—enclosed it with a suitable railing, resting on a flooring of Painswick stone,—inserted in the east wall a larger window,—provided benches for every vacant space in the body of the church,—and erected a gallery, which was carried across the western end of the little building.

The restoration of the church at Kilgwrrwg did not (as he fondly hoped it might) materially



CHURCH AT KILGOWRNO.

lessen the profanation of the Lord's day at the Devauden.

Evil habits had taken deep root in that spot ; and when by precept, by remonstrance, by reproof, he struggled with sinful practices, he was told by his neighbours, that they were acting as their forefathers had done. Persons of all ages combined to spend the Christian Sabbath in sports and pastimes, and his own school children were sometimes carried away by the example of their parents or elders. This violation of God's commands, so painful to a religious mind, greatly distressed the good school-master. To discern evil, to devise means for its removal, and to execute what was thus devised, were the ordinary stages in the daily life of James Davies. The erection of a church at the Devauden became now a cherished object of his life ; and to this object he clung, in spite of difficulties which would have discouraged a heart less stout than his.

Years of anxious desire passed over his head before his supplications were answered ; but the idea was never abandoned, and he lived to witness the realization of his fondest hopes. In the year 1827, the expediency of licensing

the school-room for the celebration of divine worship was represented to Bishop Sumner, who then filled the see of Llandaff; but who was early translated to Winchester. Bishop Copleston, who succeeded to the see of Llandaff in 1828, soon became acquainted with the village school-master, in whose labours he manifested the warmest interest throughout an episcopate of more than twenty years.

The Rev. J. C. Prosser, the present incumbent of Newchurch, was licensed to the curacy of that parish on his first admission into holy orders in the latter part of 1828. He immediately conferred with James Davies on the subject of performing public service in the school-room, which he found the old man willing to fit up for that purpose at his own expense. Mr. Prosser thereupon undertook to give a lecture in the school-room gratuitously on Sunday evenings, and the building was licensed by the bishop for the celebration of religious worship. The old man's liberal resolution was productive of a large outlay for one whose income was so limited. The room was ceiled, whitewashed, and painted, and a pulpit, reading-desk, and benches were provided at a cost of £45; and, whilst he con-

tributed the funds, he also toiled at the work like a common labourer.

The room was opened for divine service on the 11th of March, 1829, when upwards of two hundred persons were present, most of them poor cottagers, some of whom were halt, maimed, and decrepit.

A devotional spirit seemed to animate the congregation. The prayers were read by the parochial minister, who now resided in a parish in which there had not been a resident clergyman within the memory of the oldest inhabitant; and this new station had been allotted him at his own request, in the spot best calculated for concentrating his people; thus facilitating his own designs of good, by bringing the Word of God to the doors of many who were before painfully thoughtless of their spiritual concerns.

With a lowly countenance, and a solemn and devotional voice and manner, James Davies officiated as clerk, and the Rev William Jones delivered an appropriate discourse from the text, Psalm cxxii. 1:—‘I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.’

The venerable minister was heard with that unbroken attention which the occasion challenged, and which, even under less exciting circumstances, was justly due to a man of God who had grown grey in his Master’s service; and who, amidst evil report and good report, had supported for a long series of years a holy and consistent character, within the knowledge and observation of most of those to whom he now spoke.

The preacher’s heart was full, and the tears which trickled down his face indicated the depth of his

emotions. He had projected the school when stipendiary curate of the parish with a salary of £13 per annum, and an income derived from his profession not exceeding in the whole £90. He had watched over its interests with unremitting solicitude, and at that moment he beheld the accomplishment of more than he could have ventured to anticipate.

It was not his desire to remove the children from the school-room. The master's bed and furniture had been conveyed to a neighbouring cottage, which was erected by means of funds raised by Mr. Jones amongst his friends. Here the good man took up his abode, and a further extension of the buildings appeared to Mr. Jones to be impracticable; nor did there seem to him any objection to the employment as a village school of a room licensed for religious worship. James Davies, however, thought otherwise. He associated such reverential ideas with a place thus dedicated to God, that he could not rest satisfied until it had been entirely set apart for sacred uses; and he resolved that another school-room should be provided on a smaller and less expensive plan. The project seemed too great even to his zealous friends, who did not wish the children to be removed to an inferior building, and Mr. Jones would give no encouragement or assistance to his resolution. The schoolmaster's mind, however, was made up, and he once more became a beggar. He travelled round the country with success, his character being a passport to the houses and pockets of many. He thus collected sufficient funds to erect a suitable room adjoining his cottage; and in 1830 he had the satisfaction of keeping school in the new building. It is well constructed, and adequate in size to the wants of the place, and may be regarded as the result of his own exertions.

From that time the original school-room was kept under his special care in a state of simple neatness be-

coming the sacred purpose to which it was dedicated ; and a full service with a sermon was given therein every Sunday evening up to its consecration in September, 1838.*

The good schoolmaster received at this time a very gratifying testimony of the respect entertained for him by Bishop Copleston, by whom he was presented with a Prayer-book, in which is the following inscription in the bishop's handwriting:—‘To Mr. James Davies, the principal instrument and coadjutor of the Rev. William Jones, the founder of Devauden Chapel and Devauden School, from the Bishop of Llandaff—

‘He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.’

This book was carefully preserved by the old man, who retained but few of the numerous books which were presented to him ; regarding, as he did, religious works as means to reclaim the vicious, instruct the ignorant, confirm the wavering, or encourage the humble-minded Christian, and to be lent or given away to others, rather than hoarded by himself.

Before an account is given of the next great object of his life, it will be profitable to pause and consider how much he had already accom-

* Memoir of James Davies.

plished with very scanty means. Whatever he had saved before he removed to the Devauden must have been expended soon after his settlement at that spot,—in the erection of the school-room, in the repairs of Kilgwrrwg church, and in other works of piety and mercy. It has been already mentioned that his stipend at the Devauden did not for some years exceed £15, and that having been fixed at £20 in 1819, it so continued until 1839. He cultivated an acre and a quarter of poor land which belonged to the school, and was thus enabled to fatten a hog or two ; and by selling flour to the poor in small quantities, he not only ensured to them an article of good quality at a moderate price, but realised a small profit, varying from £4 to £8 a year.

He inured himself to uninterrupted toil, in order that he might thereby eke out his income, and increase his means of usefulness. He swept his own room, made his own bed, and cooked his own dinner. When he had resided several years at the Devauden, he received into his small dwelling a poor widow woman, who had been turned out of doors by her own son, and must have sought admission into the workhouse if she had not found shelter in his cottage.

The following passages supply a description of his life at the Devauden in 1831.*

The little memorial of James Davies, originally drawn up for your perusal, caught my eye this morning, and gave rise to these reflections. He is still the same, keeping the noiseless tenour of his way on his favourite hill. He may be quoted as a pleasing instance of perseverance in the work and labour of love; he is humbly and unostentatiously pursuing the path of duty—anxious to promote good of every description,—unshaken by the grossest instances of ingratitude,—undeterred by the magnitude of obstacles,—doing great things, yet lowly in his own eyes, and making much of those who fear the Lord.

Having an hour or two at my disposal, I rode towards the school, to pay him a visit; and on approaching the place, I found some children playing about, and others in little groups returning home to dinner. They all saluted me with the usual tokens of respect—a smile, a bow or curtsy, a ‘Good morning, sir,’ or ‘Your servant, sir.’

The next object I saw was the white, uncovered head of the master: he was busily engaged in his little field, with a wheelbarrow, employing all his might and activity in conveying the compost which he had prepared for dressing the field to its intended destination.

What a lesson did this teach me! Five minutes before, he had been busy in the school; now he was some distance from it, labouring hard, and fully engrossed by another occupation. The worthy man knows the value of time, and how to turn everything

* Second Letter of the Rev. Jas. Ashe Gabb to Miss Buchan.

to good account: not one moment finds him disengaged; when he is not cultivating the minds of the children, or employed in works of charity or devotion, he is collecting manure from the roads, or tending his pigs, or cultivating his field. He devotes his nights to reading. He tills his ground with his own hands, and by dint of great labour and exertion, added to a good supply of manure, makes his naturally barren land productive.* The portion of land that actually belongs to the school does not exceed an acre and a quarter; to this he has added another half-acre, purchased chiefly with his own money, and cleared by him from its natural state of stones and rubbish, at a great expense of time and labour. On this little farm he raises potatoes and other vegetables, and, in rotation, wheat or barley. Hence he supplies the piggery, which should be enumerated amongst the sources of his revenue. Though this is uncertain in its returns, yet I gathered from him incidentally, that, in one particular instance, he derived from it the profit of £5, which sum he was anxious to raise and send in aid of the Moravian Missions; and 'You know, sir,' said he, 'I cannot do much out of my school receipts towards charity, if I do not get it by carefully tending my pigs.'

I walked up his little fields, and was close to him before he perceived me; we entered at once into discourse on different subjects,—very interesting to me, on account of my former acquaintance with the neighbourhood. I was glad that I had come during the absence of the children, as it afforded us an opportunity

* Let thy recreation be manly, moderate, seasonable, lawful; if thy life be sedentary, more tending to the exercise of thy body; if active, more to the refreshing of thy mind. The use of recreation is to strengthen thy labour and sweeten thy rest.—*Quarles*.

for uninterrupted conversation, which I had not enjoyed for a considerable time. He is a man of information and sound sense, possesses a vigorous mind, and reads and reflects a great deal.

There is an originality in his mode of thinking and expressing himself, and a singleness of eye to duty in all his views of men and things. His religious opinions also are so sound, so clear, so practical, so devoid of everything like enthusiasm—to use the word in its common acceptation—that he is one whom it is scarcely possible to know and not to respect.

But even this benevolent person, in whom so many undisputed evidences of real religion exist, and exist in high perfection, had once to contend with a temper naturally hasty; and if, after all his conflicts with it, an entire victory has not been achieved,—if, in his good designs, he should sometimes pertinaciously cling to his own opinion,—

If, much enforced, he shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cool again,—

who would not feel inclined to deal tenderly with an infirmity that bows him in deep humiliation at the footstool of his God, and admire the grace which so illustriously displays its effects in his general life and conversation. I spoke in my last letter of his self-denial, and great it is; but he is no ascetic,—he views not abstinence as a mortification pleasing in the sight of God, nor in itself a duty incumbent on him; he rather deems it more suitable to his own constitution, as well as more favourable to his innate love of doing good to others. I stayed with him till the children returned from dinner, and after examining a few of them to whom he particularly called my attention, took my departure.

Were I to make a calculation of the expenditure of

this worthy man in public and private charities, the amount would exceed the bounds of credibility.

It is astonishing how much an humble individual can do whose heart is bent on good designs. It is astonishing how God will bless those whose choice is fixed on him as their portion.

This estimable character has not only been blessed himself, but is a blessing to all around him.

As a churchman, James Davies is intelligent, sound, scriptural, and devout; as a man, his general demeanour is that of humility, mildness, benevolence, frankness, and activity; as a master, he is as indefatigable in the business of the school, and as successful in the education of the children, as at the commencement of his career. He is still as bold in the Lord's cause as at the first; still as apt to advise and instruct his poor neighbours on religious subjects, though never presumptuously passing that line which becomes his station in life; still as rich in good deeds, yet standing in the midst of those works in which he has taken so large a part apparently unconscious of what he has wrought.

I am happy to assure you that the little chapel is as numerously attended as it has been at any period since its appropriation to the service of God: but he has yet an object near his heart, of appalling magnitude,—the hope of accumulating something for the endowment of the chapel, so that when he is no more, the advantages which the poor people now enjoy may with certainty be transmitted to their posterity.

It pleased him, with whom nothing is impossible, to permit his lowly and faithful servant to witness the accomplishment of the object, which had long been near to his heart; and probably few believers who have waited patiently for

the consolation of God's people, have ever said their *Nunc dimittis* with more heartfelt satisfaction and peace and joyfulness, than did James Davies, when he witnessed the success of his labours at the Devauden. He continued in an unwearied and cheerful discharge of his humble duties ; animated more and more with a fervent hope that the day was approaching when he should see the fulfilment of his heart's desire. His motto was, 'Labour, and God will help ;' and, in the practical exercise of that Christian principle, he went on his way, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, continuing instant in prayer. Meanwhile, many zealous associates persevered in their exertions, which were sanctioned and aided by their diocesan ; and they succeeded at length in raising a fund far beyond their original expectations, and somewhat, though not altogether, adequate to their wants. This fund, however, sufficed to provide, as additions to the former building, a chancel, a vestry, and an entrance porch surmounted by a bell turret ; and to supply an endowment which enabled the bishop to consecrate the simple edifice as a church of God for ever.

The site of the chapel was conveyed on the 13th June, 1836, by Henry Charles Duke of

Beaufort, for the celebration of divine service according to the liturgy, rites, and ceremonies of the Church of England; and it was declared that the right of nominating a minister to the chapel should be in the incumbent of Newchurch.

The new school-room, and the adjoining cottage built for the master's residence, with 6a. 1r. 11p. of lands, formerly common ground, were also granted by the Duke of Beaufort, on a lease for three lives; upon trust, to permit the school-room to be used for the education of the poor in the principles of the established church, and to permit the other premises to be enjoyed by the master of the school. The endowment consists of the following sums, invested in the names of trustees:—

| | | | |
|------------------|------|---|---|
| Chapel | £700 | 0 | 0 |
| School | 461 | 6 | 4 |

The consecration of the chapel took place on the 18th September, 1838.

Bishop Copleston entered the chapel preceded by the Rev. J. C. Prosser, vicar of the parish, and followed by the Rev. J. A. Gabb, the Rev. W. Jones, of St. Arvan's, the Rev. D. Jones, minister of the chapel, the Rev. T. Williams, the preacher, and a numerous body of his clergy. His lordship having taken his seat, the petition for consecration was presented to him by the Rev. J. C. Prosser, and afterwards read by the registrar. The bishop and clergy thereupon proceeded to the front door, and returned in procession up the chapel, reciting the twenty-fourth psalm in alternate verses. The bishop *then resumed* his seat, and the Rev. J. A. Gabb pre-

sented to him the conveyance of the chapel, together with a sum of £700, raised by voluntary contributions, for its endowment ; and the sentence of consecration was read by the Rev. W. Jones, and signed by the bishop.

All whose names had become familiar to the readers of the memoir of James Davies, were engaged in the offices which each would have desired to select for himself. The venerable old man, who said, twenty-four years ago, Here shall be a school-room for the poor, and whose hand laid the foundation-stone of the building, now said, This building shall henceforth be the temple of the living God.

The pastor who originally petitioned the bishop that the school-room might be licensed for the performance of divine worship, after the lapse of eleven years re-petitioned the same bishop for its final consecration ; whilst he whose pen had actively contributed to promote both objects, presented the petition to the bishop for that sentence, by which the Devauden chapel was irrevocably united to the Church of England.

The appointed services having been read by the bishop, the Rev. J. C. Prosser commenced the morning prayers. Beneath him kneeled, as clerk, the old school-master, overpowered by feelings of joy and thankfulness ; but still an example of calm and fervent piety, equally removed from fanaticism and from formality. Never was the solemn and beautiful consecration service more impressively read, or more deeply felt, than on that morning, when ministers and people alike gave their hearts to the work in which they were engaged.

The following hymn, composed for the occasion, was sung before the communion service :—

Almighty Lord, at whose dread feet,
Archangels cast their crowns of gold ;
Whom—throned on thy eternal seat—
The heaven of heavens cannot hold !

Thou, God, who o'er the world dost reign,
Awfully great in majesty,
Can it be true that thou wilt deign
To sojourn with mortality?

Pavilioned in a temple bright
With thine own glorious purity,
Filling all space, and breadth, and height,
Sole monarch of futurity!

Lord, can it be that thou wilt place
Thy name in temples such as this?
And stoop to win a guilty race
From earthly scenes to realms of bliss?

Then from thy dwelling-place on high,
Be with thy spirit ever near;
Hallow this house, and sanctify
The services we offer here.

And, for the loved Redeemer's sake,
Incline us but for thee to live;
Receive the prayers thy servants make,
And when thou hearest, Lord, forgive!

An admirable sermon was preached by the Rev. T. Williams, rector of Llanvapley,* from 1 Cor. iii. 16. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?' The discourse was heard with delight by the congregation, and elicited the strongest commendations from the bishop. The collection after the service, in aid of the endowment fund, amounted to £43.

The duties of chaplain at the consecration were performed by the Rev. J. A. Gabb, who presented to the chapel a complete communion service of plate; and it must have been to him a source of deep thankfulness

* Now Archdeacon of Llandaff.

and joy, that his labours had been so signally and abundantly blessed.

The preacher thus closed his exhortation:—‘And now a word as to this house which we have built. For what purpose is it reared? Is it not that the work which I have been endeavouring to describe should go on within its walls? That here some wise master builder, wise in the wisdom which is from above, and therefore wise to win souls, may, according to the grace of God which is given unto him, lay the only foundation which can be laid for sinners. That here Jesus Christ may be evidently set forth, crucified, as the only rock on which to rest for pardon, for acceptance, and for peace. That here, too, souls may be built up and edified under the ministry of the word, and go on from strength to strength, while the Spirit, whose peculiar office and work it is, applies that word to the hearts and consciences of them that hear. And while we thus look forward with faith and hope to the future, and earnestly pray for God’s blessing on this place, let us look back with gratitude and thankfulness to the past. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. His good and guiding hand has been distinctly visible throughout. He stirred up one of his poor but faithful servants to care for the spiritual destitution of this once neglected spot; he engaged another to make its wants more widely known; he moved the hearts of many to give willingly and freely of the silver and gold which he had given them. And now he has spared his aged servant, who laid the foundation of this house, to see at length the head-stone thereof brought forth with shoutings, and to behold it consecrated for ever to the worship and service of his God. To him that ordereth all things according to the good pleasure of his will, be all the praise, and all the glory.

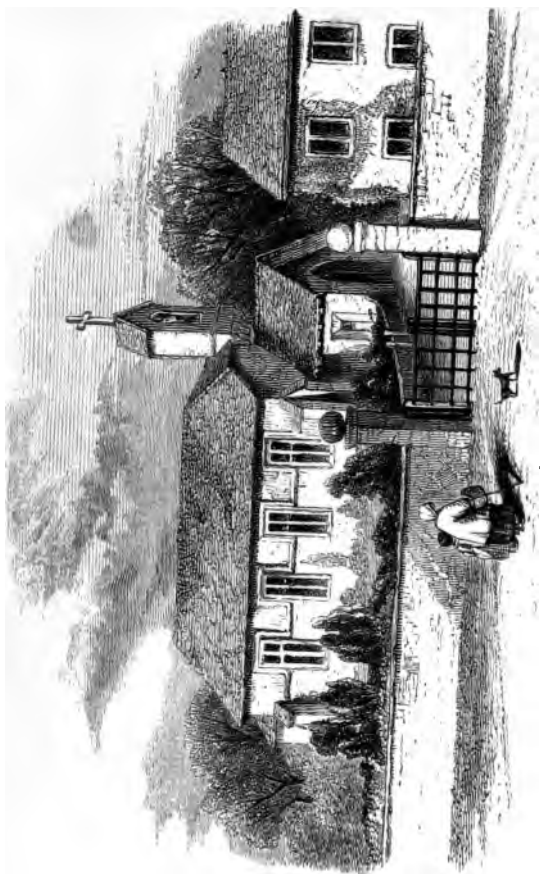
‘Somewhat, however, is still lacking to complete the

work, which it will be your privilege to supply. But on this subject I have no wish to dwell. I would rather intreat you to give your own selves unto the Lord, to yield yourselves, bodies and souls, to his service, and then you will need no word of exhortation ; but you will be ready to this and to every good work, and according as the Lord hath blessed and prospered you, so will you do for his name's sake, and for his glory.

‘And now, brethren, I commend you unto God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.’*

It would require somewhat of the lively and glowing interest raised by early associations with the country, in one who knew the former wants and the present blessings of the district, to enter fully into the feelings which seemed on that day to pervade all classes of persons, who came from far and near to witness the dedication of the house of God. But no one, to whom attachment to our holy faith is not a stranger feeling—no one, who delights in the happy issue of humble but hearty labours in the cause of our beloved church—no one, even, who habitually rejoices in the success of those who devote themselves to any good work for promoting the welfare of their fellow-creatures, can be uninterested by that day's proceedings.

* A brief Memoir of James Davies.



LETAUDEN CHAPEL AND SCHOOL.

‘I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber, neither the temples of my head to take any rest, until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.’*

The pious resolution of the royal psalmist had been often present to the humble village school-master; and now the temple of God was completed, and the place of door-keeper in His house, for which the good old man had longed, was his own. He officiated as clerk and bell-ringer at Devauden chapel, from the time it was first licensed for divine worship, until his departure from that place in 1848. Never were responses given with more pious reverence; ‘and never,’ says the parochial minister, ‘did I hear such an Amen as his.’ It is difficult to estimate the value of such a life as that of James Davies. By him the faithful were edified and comforted, the ignorant instructed, and the young trained up in the paths of godliness.

In his school the children were taught the solemn obligation, which had been contracted for them in baptism; when they promised by their sureties to take the Lord for their God, and were admonished so to mortify their evil

* Psalm cxxxii. v. 4, 5.

and corrupt affections, as daily to advance in virtue, and godliness of living. Thus he pursued the even tenour of his way; and the remainder of his life at the Devauden, whilst it presented no very memorable incidents, was passed in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with his God.

A life so noiseless was remarkable, however, for unvarying fidelity to the Christian profession; and for that unceasing conflict with the spirit of the world, which a course of watchful self-denial imposes on the followers of a crucified Master. The path of the just is as a shining light; and however humble may be the walk of good men, their light illumines the darkness not only of their own neighbourhood, but of the land wherein they dwell. Hence is it that many of the acts of mercy, by which James Davies was distinguished, have been treasured up by humble Christians, who observed the course of one whose life was spent in doing good: and it is from the recollection of one loving friend that several of the remaining incidents of the life of the old man, whilst he continued at the Devauden, will be given, sometimes in the language of him by whom they have been affectionately treasured. Behold his description of a Lord's day at the Devauden.



Memory, eager to recal the actions of the good man, feasts fondly on the Sabbath dawn, when, at the appointed hour, this true messenger of God's tidings sounds that church bell which proclaims the house of God to be open, and calls on all, on this His day, to leave the world and worship in His temple. Groups are seen on every side—in craggy lanes, on the public path, along the dusty road—all hastening towards the sacred building. How does the heart of the old man leap for joy! and his features beam with love!—for on this very day, perhaps, a stranger to his God may hear some words of warning, which shall be sharper than a two-edged sword. As they take their seats his spirit seems to have descended on all; for each, by a devout and humble manner, appears sensible of the presence of that God, whose they are, and whom they have come to worship. Observe well, his anxious care that all may receive suitable accommodation; and behold him, when the clergyman has entered, walk along the aisle, to see that all are seated where they may listen and learn without distraction. As clerk, he now leads the responses of the congregation; and who can be insensible to that tone and manner, which give to our beautiful

liturgy, its appropriate devotional character, or to that heartfelt and reverential declaration of faith, on which his hopes of salvation are alone rested, conveyed in the language of those creeds, wherein the Church Catholic has embodied the faith, once for all delivered to the saints. When the clergyman enters the pulpit, observe how intently he watches every syllable of his discourse; in order, to use his accustomed words, which bespoke an humility ever present, 'that he might learn to do a little more good.' But those tears which have been called to his eyes and now flow down his cheeks, by what have they been occasioned? The congregation are engaged in singing the ninety-fifth Psalm; and although he cannot sing a note, the words, 'O, come, loud anthems let us sing,' are never heard by him, but his whole frame manifests how thoroughly the soul is attuned to the psalmody, notwithstanding that, he has been denied the power, of proclaiming with the voice, what the heart so deeply feels. It was impossible not to be moved, by the fervour of his manner, visibly embodying as it did the declaration of the Psalmist: 'It is good to sing praises unto our God;' and the solemnity of his whole demeanour, when engaged in public worship, recalled to memory the expression of *Hagar* when found by the angel in the wilder-

ness—‘Thou, God, seest me.’ He ever inculcated the duty of reverent behaviour at church; of kneeling in prayer, of standing up to praise and give thanks, and of doing everything in the house of God decently and in order; of never evincing levity of manner, but of manifesting that reverential fear which is suitable to the worship of Him, who says, ‘As I live, every knee shall bow to me.’ Pained as he often was, by negligent and unbecoming deportment in those who attended public worship, he printed and distributed a tract, wherein the majesty of God, and the sanctity of the places set apart for His glory were urged on the thoughtless and irreverent, as motives not only for humility of heart, but also for lowliness of outward manner.

The Sunday-school occupied a large portion of his time and attention. He valued catechising highly, agreeing with George Herbert that thereby, the three great ends of Christian teaching are most effectually promoted.

1st. To infuse a competent knowledge of salvation in every one.

2ndly. To multiply and build up this knowledge to a spiritual temple.

3rdly. To inflame this knowledge, to press and draw it to practice, turning it to reformation of life, by pithy and lively exhortations.

As the sweet singer of the temple taught, so practised the village schoolmaster.

In catechizing there is an humbleness which exceedingly delights him, as by way of exercise upon himself for the advancing of his own mortification; for in preaching to others he forgets not himself, but is first a sermon to himself, and then to others. He useth and preferreth the ordinary church catechism—partly for obedience to authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may be everywhere professed, especially since many remove from parish to parish, who, like Christian soldiers, are to give the word, and to satisfy the congregation, by their catholic answers. He exacts of all the doctrine of the catechism, of the younger sort the very words, of the elder the substance. When once his scholars have learned the words, he thinks it the most useful way that a teacher can take to go over the same, but in other words, for many say the catechism by rote, without ever piercing into the sense of it.

And this is an admirable way of teaching, wherein the catechised will at length find delight, and by which the catechiser, if he once get the skill, will draw out the deeper points of religion.

Familiar illustrations often help, and doubtless the Holy Scriptures intended the use of such aids when it condescends to the naming of a plough, a hatchet, a bushel, leaven, boys piping and dancing; showing that things of ordinary use are not only to serve in the way of drudgery, but to be washed and cleansed, and serve for lights even of heavenly truths.*

* A Priest to the Temple, chap. 21. The parson catechising.

Having regarded the village schoolmaster's day of rest, we may now behold his days of labour. The school and its duties occupied most of his time, and whilst guiding his young flock in the paths of knowledge, he earnestly sought to make them wise unto salvation. His estimate of a teacher's responsibilities was not, however, bounded by the school-room, nor limited to the period of school attendance, nor confined to the children who frequented the school. He supplied the scholars with religious books, which he distributed also largely to others; and he printed and circulated at his own cost works which he thought might promote the kingdom of that Master, whose service he never neglected. He had often seen the seed sown in the school-room hindered from taking root, or, having germinated, wither and die, for want of appropriate culture in the homes of the children. The teacher can never stand in the parents' stead; and the school is but the entrance to that life, which must be completed, if at all, by home training. This subject was always present to his mind, and his anxious solicitude ever proclaimed to parents, that the future life of their progeny depends on parental precept and example, in the years of infancy and childhood.

Amongst his papers was found an acknowledgment for £15, remitted in one sum, in 1837, for a large number of copies of a work called *Persuasives to Early Piety*, procured by him for gratuitous distribution, — a sum which was equal to the whole of his stipend for three-quarters of a year. Two years afterwards, he prevailed upon the author of that work to publish an essay on *Parental Care* by agreeing to purchase 200 copies for gratuitous distribution.

In a letter written to the author, the old man describes the inattention of parents to all except the worldly interests of their children ; their neglect of the school and the church ; and the difficulties which beset his endeavours to secure the attendance of the population at one or the other : and thus explains the motives which had led him to settle at the Devauden, and the influences by which his usefulness had been lessened :—

I have for twenty-one years been keeping a school in a country place, where I fear there is very little vital religion. My intention in coming to this place was to teach the poor ignorant children their duty to God and the knowledge of the precious Saviour, and I have faithfully endeavoured to do this ; but I fear little good has been done, and I have reason to think that what has been attempted for their good in the school has been undone at home. I have for a long

time earnestly wished that something might be published to remind parents of their duty to their children—to bring them up in the fear of God. It is with much difficulty that I can prevail upon part of the population of this neighbourhood to send their children to school and church upon Sundays.

He provided for every farm servant in the parish of Newchurch, a Bible, at an expense to himself of several pounds; thinking that although many, perhaps most of them, would be thrown on a shelf, or stowed away in a box, yet the time might come, when, led by the mysterious workings of Providence, their attention would be arrested, and their lives reformed by the perusal of some passages of God's Word. Often, when he discovered a poor youth yearning for knowledge, his house has been open to receive him. An agricultural labourer, who wished to acquire some school learning when out of work, but had no means to obtain it, was received by the old man, and not only supplied with food, but shared for many months the only bed his cottage contained,—nor was he sent away until he could read easy portions of the Scriptures, and write his name legibly.

On a winter's day, he appeared at Chepstow, with a boy eight years of age, clad in rags, whom he took to a clothes-shop to be completely

clothed. This was a poor boy, who, during his attendance at the school, had lost his father. On his way to Chepstow, falling in with a lad, who evinced intelligence and capacity, he exhorted him to prepare for the rite of confirmation, and on parting, gave him several copies of a valuable tract on the subject of that ordinance.

The same day, when at Chepstow, he was so interested by the account given him by a lady of the relief which was afforded by the scripture readers, to the temporal wants of the Irish poor, that he asked her to receive for that object a contribution of 5s., and before he parted from her he increased the sum to 10s., which was all the money he had. He was thereby prevented from paying for a Bible and some tracts, which he had purchased for distribution ; and he had resolved to leave those books behind him, when an envelope, bearing the Bath post-mark, was put into his hand, inclosing a sovereign, which a gentleman who desired to be unknown had thus left for him. The old man, on opening the envelope, said, with a grateful smile, 'Well, well, God has put it in my power to do a little more good;' and on his return homeward, gave utterance to the pious breathings of a grateful heart.

Shortly before his departure from Devauden, a

young man left 5s. at the Chepstow Depository of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to be employed in buying whatever he might think best. A new Sunday-school had been recently opened at Newchurch, and with this money he bought six Bibles for that school. Being told that the District Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge would doubtless supply books to the school if application were made to them,—he answered, ‘No, no; they have enough to do, and I will find that school in books as long as I live.’

For Sunday-school teachers, he ever manifested a very friendly regard, and often sent them presents of books, either for their own use, or for their school library.

The following letter accompanied Archbishop Leighton’s Practical Commentary upon the First Epistle of Saint Peter, which he presented to two teachers in the Church Sunday-school at Abergavenny:—

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

I cannot sufficiently thank you for the very kind manner in which you notice me—believe me I am very much obliged to you both—I have sent you two books, the choicest that ever came into my hands, the Bible excepted. I hope you are both well, and please to accept of my kind love to you both. I am well in

health, and on Tuesday next shall enter on my seventy-eighth year.

My dear friends, with my earnest desire for your health and happiness ; but, above all, that you may increase in the knowledge and love of Christ, and bring more and more fruits of holiness and obedience, and may, through His grace, be made more and more useful in your day and generation, I remain, your much obliged and very humble servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden School, August the 19th, 1842.

On a summer evening, after school hours, he sometimes walked to Chepstow, a distance of five miles, with a heavy load, the produce of his garden, to be presented to a friend, in acknowledgment of acts of kindness ; and returned with supplies of books, to be presented to school children, or employed in some other manner to edification.

He frequently went a long distance to visit the sick. In 1848, when in his 82nd year, he occasionally walked along a bad road, a distance of six miles going and returning, in order to visit a boy thirteen years old, then suffering from consumption, which proved a lingering disease. On his return on one occasion, he was with difficulty prevailed upon to mount a horse, which he rode for a couple of miles, and he then declared that he had not ridden a horse for a *period of forty years.*

In his visits to the sick, he used set forms of prayer; and in a copy of the offices of the church, which was presented to him, is the following inscription:—

‘As a small testimonial of respect for the unwearied labours of James Davies on behalf of the poor and indigent, and in admiration of his zealous attachment to the doctrine of our blessed Redeemer, this book is respectfully presented for his acceptance by his sincere friend,

JAMES CLARK.

Chepstow.

The following letter was written to a relation on the death of her son:—

MY DEAR RELATION,

I received your kind present, and I am very much obliged to you for it; but I am sorry to find that you still feel unhappy for the death of your dear boy. Well, we must make allowance for the feelings of a mother; but there are other considerations that ought to give you great comfort—you know that, had he lived, he would have been exposed to great temptations. However profitable may be the profession of a lawyer, I believe no situation can be more dangerous as far as soul is concerned. Now, the Lord has taken him out of this and all other dangers, and I consider you to be the happiest of mothers. Your dear child has given you evidence that he has gone to the precious Saviour. I once had a dear friend, and I witnessed his happy and joyful death: he died about the same age as your dear boy; and what were my thoughts of him are now my thoughts of your dear son. His warfare is accomplished—the victory is won, and he

has entered into his eternal rest. Delivered from the difficulties and distresses of the present world, he will feel no more the trials and temptations he had once to encounter, and to which we that are left behind are exposed. No, my dear friend, thou wast highly favoured of thy blessed precious Saviour, who has taken thee to Himself, and safely landed thee upon the shores of everlasting peace—now sin, that worst of all distresses, shall never distress thee—the once corruptions of thine own heart shall never trouble thee more—nor the temptations of Satan ever assault thee—the time of trial and probation is ended, and thou art accepted. Therefore, unto Him that hath loved thee, and hath washed thee from thy sins in His own blood, and hath made thee a king and a priest unto God and His Father—to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Now, my dear relation, if these few hints are carefully considered, I hope you will not only bear your loss patiently, but be thankful to God that doeth all things well, and believe me,

I remain, yours affectionately,

JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden, May the 9th, 1842.

Thrice in the course of four years he walked from Devauden to Hereford, a distance of thirty miles, to visit the aged widow of his former friend and pastor, the Rev. William Jones ; and on each occasion he purchased a large supply of tracts, which he distributed along the road : remarking, that Herefordshire was blessed with a rich soil, but was as destitute of the true riches as the poorer country in which it had been his lot to labour.

His summer vacation was always employed in distributing to the poor, copies of the Holy Scriptures, the Prayer-book, and religious tracts. These books he purchased at some depository of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in his neighbourhood, and that to which he most commonly resorted was Chepstow. He travelled on foot on those occasions to a distance from his home, carrying what to an aged man must have been a heavy load; and the neighbourhood of his birthplace was occasionally visited by him, during the latter part of his residence at the Devauden, on this errand of mercy.

The following letter, was written by him to the Rev. Wm. Crawley, now Archdeacon of Monmouth :—

REVEREND AND VERY DEAR SIR,

From what I know of the country about Llanvair-green, I am fully persuaded a chapel of ease in that place would be the means of doing abundant good; how much is beyond all calculation. Please to tell Mr. Davies to put my name down for ten pounds; I shall have it in my power to pay five pounds in July next, and the other five pounds the Candlemas following. I hope Mr. Davies will do all that he can to make a beginning; and from what we have experienced at Devauden, I am fully persuaded that God will so bless the endeavour, that success shall attend it; so that the whole undertaking shall be most happily completed, not by might nor by power, but by the blessing of the

Almighty resting upon it. None that put their trust in God ever failed.

Sir, I remain your very humble servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden, January the 7th, 1842.

The spot described in that letter is a portion of a hill called the Graig, which, rising abruptly from the lowlands, is a prominent object in the north-eastern side of the county, but is devoid of that picturesque beauty which characterises the highland scenery of the neighbouring district.

Locally within the parish of Llantilio-Creseny, it is on the confines of Grosmont and Skenfreth, and far distant from any parish church. On the slopes of the hill are woody thickets and commons, with many cottages. At a subsequent period, the old man pointed out from this spot the house in which his infancy was passed, and the village in which he had grown up to manhood as a journeyman weaver.

A letter to his widowed sister shows his ardent desire to promote a work, which he believed would prove a blessing to thousands, when he should be no more ; and the delight with which he hailed the recent completion of another design of Christian benevolence, in a town where some of his early days had been passed.

MY DEAR SISTER,

You desire to know the lady's name who has built the new church in Abergavenny. You must know her family, Miss Herbert, daughter of Mr. Charles Herbert, ironmonger, Abergavenny, who has not only built and endowed a new church, but has likewise built a house for the minister, a school-house, and a residence for the mistress, and eight alms-houses, and, as far as I know, at her own expense.

I have good news to tell you, at which I am sure you will feel pleased. There is a chapel of ease to be built in the parish of Llantilio, on Llanvair-green. I am fully persuaded, from what I know of the country, that it will be the means of doing a great deal of good. Under this impression, I have promised to give ten pounds towards this undertaking, five pounds in July next, and five pounds the January following, not having it in my power to make the remittance sooner; and as you are so well acquainted with the spot on which this blessed work is going forward, and it is so near to the place where you and I were born, and as you have it so well in your power, I hope the little I am able to give is but a trifle to what you will give to help forward this best of charities,—a charity that may prove a blessing to thousands, when you and I are in our graves. From what I have heard, I believe our sister Sarah is dead, and that she died about last Christmas. None of the family sent to let me know of her illness or death. I am much better in health, but my digestion is so weak that bread and tea is almost all my support. Wishing you your health for many years to come,

I remain, your brother,

JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden School, June the 17th, 1842.

His sister did not follow the leadings of her benevolent brother, and when nearly a year had elapsed he wrote to her the following letter:—

MY DEAR SISTER,

I am very glad to hear from you. The reason I have not written to you sooner is, that I thought you were offended with me on account of my last letter,—for in that I desired to have an answer, to know how you were, and no answer came. I am very glad to hear you are so far recovered, and I am quite rejoiced to hear you express yourself as you do. God Almighty grant that your life, that has been so mercifully spared, may be given up and devoted to the service of Almighty God. You must have learnt from your sickness and suffering that there is nothing in this world that can be depended upon—nothing, my sister, nothing but the mercies of God in Christ Jesus. I have heard nothing of your son, and I am very sorry you have heard nothing of him. I am very glad to hear mention of the Reverend Mr. Newel and the Reverend Mr. Scott. The Lord be with them and bless them, and all the faithful ministers of His word. Please to remember me very kindly to them. You have said nothing of Mr. Camplin; I hope he is well. Remember me to your son-in-law and daughter, and to Henry. I hope he is kind and dutiful to his grandmother. I have been very poorly part of the two last winters from taking cold, but I am now as well as I have been for some years. If we both live, you will hear from me in July next.

I remain, my dear sister, yours affectionately,

JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden School, May the 27th, 1843.

The chapel at Llanvair-green was opened for

public worship in 1843 ; and in answer to an invitation to attend the ceremonial, the following letter was received from him by Archdeacon Crawley :—

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

I have received from Mr. George a statement of the cost of building Llanvair Chapel, and I am disappointed and vexed at the largeness of the sum; and although I should be sorry to do or say anything to the disadvantage of the undertaking, yet I am fully persuaded there might have been erected a building altogether as useful, as convenient, and to answer the purpose in all respects, at little more than half the expense of the present building. I am much obliged to you for the kind invitation to come to the opening of the chapel, but I am not able to undertake the journey. I hope Mrs. Crawley and all the family is well, and with many thanks for your kindness and condescension,

I remain, your very humble servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden School, July the 22nd, 1848.

He was mistaken in supposing that the outlay at Llanvair was excessive; the building, which presents an ecclesiastical character, and affords accommodation for 160 persons, having been completed for £522. Hearing that it was proposed to endow the chapel, the old man offered a donation of £20 for that purpose, but this design was not prosecuted.*

* The chapel was consecrated on the 27th May, 1850.

One of his last acts at the Devauden was to contribute towards rebuilding the neighbouring church of Llangwm-Isha.

His Christian charities were not, however, limited by neighbourhood or country. He desired that the gospel might be proclaimed in all lands and amongst all people; and that the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

In the year 1846, Archdeacon Crawley, when crossing the Devauden, was told by the old man, on whom he called, that from the reports which had been put into his hands by a neighbouring clergyman, he thought the Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge and for Propagating the Gospel were doing great good. He then produced, from the bottom of his pocket, two sovereigns, which had been carefully folded in paper, and handed them to the Archdeacon as his contribution to those Societies; and from that time he subscribed, every year, £1 to the funds of each.

It was a source of great pleasure to him to attend the anniversaries of the Monmouthshire District Committees of those Societies, when the bishop of the diocese always presided.

In the summer of 1847, a deputation from the

Propagation Society attended a meeting at Chepstow, at which Bishop Copleston was present. A few days before the meeting a friend repeated to James Davies a prayer for missions, which he had recently seen, and which is here inserted :—

Almighty God, whose Son our Lord Jesus Christ sent forth his apostles, commanding them to preach the Gospel in all the world, have mercy upon those who have left their native shores to carry tidings of salvation to distant lands; let thy grace prevent and follow them, thine arm protect, thy Holy Spirit guide and comfort them,—and prosper thou the labour of their hands, for the sake of the same thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The old man became so much interested, that he desired his friend to repeat the prayer to him more than once; and thinking it, as he said, likely to do good, he caused 500 copies to be printed at his own expense, and distributed at the meeting. Bishop Copleston, who presided, made use of the prayer, and the proceedings of the day gave the old man great delight.

The last meeting of the Societies which he attended, was held in the autumn of the same year; and in a letter which he afterwards wrote to Archdeacon Crawley he remarks :—‘I was very much pleased with the meeting at Chepstow, but how much do the rich and great in the

county that were absent, injure themselves, in not coming forward, to promote the interests of a Society, whose object it is to bring glory to God, and good to all the world.'

Two years afterwards, the Bishop and the village schoolmaster were both absent from the anniversary ; and Archdeacon Crawley, who presided, communicated to the assembled meeting that James Davies was then lying dead, and that Bishop Copleston was on a bed of sickness, from which he never rose.

A friend having called at the Devauden with an annual report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, his attention was rivetted by some extracts from letters of the Bishop of Calcutta,—describing the vast extent and destitution of his diocese, and anticipating the time when his own head should be laid beneath the holy table of the cathedral church ; and a thousand black faces should be uplifted to heaven, listening to the preacher of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come. This was a chord, to which the old man's sensibilities keenly vibrated, and, bursting into tears, he exclaimed, ' Lord, let thy kingdom come !'

On another occasion, Mr. Hatherly, the zealous and successful collector for the funds of *Frederickton Cathedral*, called upon James

Davies to solicit his aid for that work ; but the old man did not approve of what he thought extravagance in ornament, conceiving a plain building to be the best adapted for the humble worshipper : yet, as Mr. Hatherly was so good as to call upon him, he would give half-a-crown.

Soon afterwards, Bishop Medley's *Advice to Sunday-school Teachers* engaged his earnest attention, as specially adapted to the class of young persons for whom it was intended ; and he resolved to contribute £1 towards the cathedral at Frederickton, because he was sure the bishop was a good man, and had written so nicely a book, which he thought was doing a great deal of good. He was gratified on receiving, through Mr. Hatherly, the following message from the bishop :—‘ Will you remember me especially to Mr. Davies, and say I heartily wish him success, and that God’s blessing may rest upon him.’

In reply to some kind expressions which were contained in a letter from Mr. Hatherly, the old man wrote the following letter :—

Llangattock-Lingoed, Nov. 11th, 1848.

DEAR SIR,

I received your kind and encouraging letter, but you think much, very much, too highly of me, a poor sinner, who have no hope, but in the mercy of God in

Christ Jesus. I pray the God of Heaven to bless you and your labour of love, and may the kingdom of the Redeemer be exalted and extended over the face of the whole world. My dear sir, I remain your very humble servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

When about to leave the Devauden, he told the friend from whom many of the incidents here related have been derived, that he should take with him to Llangattock the bishop's *Advice to Sunday-school Teachers*, to read in a place where he might find none to remind him of his duty.

In that year of bright promise for the colonies of this country, when four bishops were consecrated, and sent out to bear rule over numerous churches founded in distant dependencies of Britain,—James Davies suggested a subscription for them in his own neighbourhood, in order that they might not be hindered, by want of funds, in their conflict with the powers of ignorance and sin, but might go forth thoroughly prepared to plant the ensign of the cross on a foundation which could not be shaken. His own contribution was £3, of which £2 were forwarded to the Bishop of Cape Town, because, as the old man thought, that diocese included the

most benighted portion of our colonial empire, and that for which the least had been done by the mother country.

The efforts made for the conversion of the Jewish people continued to interest him, and he always sought with avidity for the records of the society established for that object. He regarded with deep affection the condition of the Holy Land, and of the Jewish families who dwell in its towns and villages. Anxious, therefore, were his inquiries about the Anglican Church at Jerusalem ; and the residence of an English bishop in that city was regarded by him as an event of deep interest to the Christian world.

The following incidents, full of characteristic interest, belong to the narrative of his labours at the Devauden.

Several years since, on a Christmas-eve, a friend from Chepstow, who regarded this faithful servant of God with fond affection, and who reverences his memory with the tenderest love, weary and foot-worn, sought the old man's school, as the shades of night were darkening on the Devauden-hill. In that exposed situation, the wind blew with extreme violence, whilst the rain fell in torrents ; but within the room the

aged patriarch, who sat by a cheerful fire, welcomed his friend, whilst he beguiled the passing hours by descanting on the subjects, which were always nearest to his heart, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.'

The inclemency of the weather precluded his friend's departure for some hours, and during this time the latch of the school-room door was often raised by applicants for a portion of that bounty, which he loved to distribute on the festival of our Lord's nativity. No one left his door on that night empty-handed; and for each did he offer up the prayer of faith that God's blessing might rest upon them.

Oh, thou didst never close thy door
Of mercy to the worldly poor,
But lov'dst thy bounty to impart
Most freely to the poor in heart.

The same friend who has recorded the last incident, accompanied from Chepstow two men, living in different parts of the kingdom, to see the church and school at the Devauden, in February, 1848; and after passing an hour of deep interest and solemn edification with the old man, they knelt down in the school-room, where he read, with remarkable fervour, a

suitable prayer, and then commended his visitors to the favour and protection of the Almighty. They parted, never to meet again in this world ; and the strangers, to whom the old man was then first made known, declared they had never been so deeply affected as when they knelt down in the Devauden school-room. Shortly before his removal to Llangattock, the same friend, with a companion, walked from Chepstow to the Devauden on a Sunday afternoon, to attend Divine service in the chapel. They found a lady from the neighbourhood of London, who had attended the morning service at the church of Chapel-hill, three miles distant, and who, having come on to the Devauden, had been hospitably received by James Davies. Before the evening service began, the lady read a short tract, after which the old man read the twenty-third Psalm—a great favourite with him ; and his reading from the Psalms could not be excelled. He then proceeded to toll the bell, and, in his absence, the lady commissioned his friend to expend 25s. in the purchase of such warm clothing as he might most need. The party then entered the church, where the old man acted as clerk. The

day had been gloomy, and rain now fell so fast, that it was arranged the lady should occupy his only bed, whilst he withdrew to a neighbour's house. She parted from the venerable man on the following morning, and never saw him more ; but amongst his papers were found two letters from her, addressed to him as a dear friend, whose remembrance she desires in his prayers, and whom she asks the Lord to be with, and bless in Christ Jesus.

The employment of this lady's gift led to a minute investigation of the wardrobe of the old man, then in his 83rd year ; when it was discovered that he did not wear flannel, had no warm stockings, and was much in want of shirts ; for although, on a recent visit to Chepstow, he had bought linen for two shirts, the linen had been appropriated to supply the urgent need of a poor aged widow living in the neighbourhood. The lady's gift was, under these circumstances, peculiarly acceptable, and was gratefully acknowledged.

Mention has already been made of his niece, Judith Thorley, to whom the following letters were addressed during the latter portion of his residence at the Devauden:—

Devauden School, December 12th, 1846.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I am very glad to hear from you. How much I esteem and respect you for your most kind assistance to your sister in her affliction and deep distress. God Almighty will abundantly bless you for it: He has promised to do so, and His promises will never fail. I am very glad you are so well recovered, and from my heart do I wish you health and every blessing. Poor Hannah has stroke upon stroke; but I hope and believe it will all end well. If it will be the means of bringing her nearer to Christ, it will be a blessed affliction. I have sent you a tract that I have had printed for giving away; and, if you can take the liberty, let your valuable lady see it, for from what I have heard, she has been exceedingly kind to you, my dear Judith.

I remain, affectionately, your uncle,

JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden School, June 12th, 1847.

MY DEAR NIECE,

It was very kind and good of you to send me an account of my sister's illness. I beg to assure you I have done everything I could to impress upon her mind the necessity of true religion, of faith in Christ Jesus, and the necessity of being born again. For this purpose I sent her several valuable books; and, in the best manner I could, I wrote to remind her of these things, and I have reason to think I offended her in so doing. I can do nothing now but pray to the Almighty for her. I hope you do have your health, and I shall at all times be glad to hear from you. I have lately had a book that to me is truly valuable—Hugh White's *Profession and Practice*: it is published in

Dublin, but may be had in London. I would strongly recommend it to you.

I remain, my dear niece, affectionately your uncle,
JAMES DAVIES.

Devauden School, September 8th, 1847!

MY DEAR AND MUCH ESTEEMED NIECE,

I have been a week from home, otherwise I should have answered your letter sooner. I am very glad to hear my sister is better. God deals very mercifully with her. I pray God she may improve the long-suffering and mercy of the Almighty in sparing her to the best of all purposes—to seek repentance and mercy in Christ Jesus. I am very glad to hear the favourable account you give of Henry—dear boy, God Almighty bless him, and give him His heavenly grace. I am very glad to hear from you, and remain affectionately yours,

JAMES DAVIES.

The passages which follow are extracts from a copy book, in which the old man appears to have inserted meditations which he desired to preserve; and although some of those passages are extracts from the writings of other men, they serve to illustrate the pervading tone of his thoughts, and to manifest the motives by which he was supported in his daily struggles with the world.

He that has a true and living faith in the Son of God may say, Christ Jesus is mine, and I am his; for

me he left his throne of glory; for me he came down from heaven; for me he became man; for me he fulfilled all righteousness; for me he sweated drops of blood; for me he suffered the shameful and painful death of the cross; for me he suffered the wrath and indignation of his Heavenly Father,—that wrath and indignation that was due to me for my sins; upon him were my iniquities laid, and by his stripes is my soul healed: and all the sufferings of the Son of God were voluntarily undertaken by him to deliver my soul from the pains of eternal death, and to give me an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And when by my actual transgressions I had destroyed myself, not only was I lost through the sins of my first parents, but by my own transgressions ruined; and when I had no desire to leave my sins, and to seek his mercy, even then he followed me, with invitation after invitation, with mercy after mercy; passing by my perverseness and rebellion against him, he would never leave me until he had accomplished his intentions of mercy in bringing me home to himself. O my glorified Redeemer, is this thy love to me? I desire to give up unto thee all I am and have; my soul and my body, my time and my talents, and all thou hast given me, to devote all to thy service. Henceforth I desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, while others are busily seeking their riches and pleasure and enjoyment in this world. O my precious Saviour! thou art my portion, my treasure, my riches, and my exceeding great reward; thou hast commanded us, if we love thee, to keep thy commandments. Without thee we can do nothing, but thy strength is made perfect in weakness. O enable me to be holy in all manner of conversation,—to have respect to all thy commandments! O may I be enabled by thy grace

to overcome every evil desire, every sin that doth so easily beset me! O my Saviour, that art made of God to me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, if thou art my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification and redemption, then, in having thee, I have all things! O may I be willing to suffer all things for thy sake—poverty, contempt, persecution—to be esteemed the offscouring of all things! This is the character, and these are the desires of the Christian—he that is born again—he that has a true and living faith in Christ Jesus; this is the faith that overcometh the world. This faith enables the persecuted servants of God in all ages to suffer all things—death itself, in its most cruel and excruciating form—rather than give up the hope of a blessed immortality. But are there not those that deceive themselves in this very matter?—who take to themselves all the joy and comfort of the true believer in Christ Jesus, but who deny him by wicked works?—who are worldly-minded, covetous, dishonest, unjust in their dealings, refusing to pay their just and lawful debts? O my unhappy brethren, you that are in this awful situation, your state is the most dangerous of all others. Hear what God's Word says to you,—‘See that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such.’ Again,—‘Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him that he cannot sin, because he is born of God.’ In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil; ‘Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.’ In taking to yourselves the character and privileges of the true Christian and leading ungodly lives, you not only make it appear that you are deceiving yourselves and ruining your own souls, but you



are Christ's greatest enemies, and bring disgrace to his holy religion, and make it appear contemptible to others.

From a principle of love to the Saviour, we ought to endeavour to glorify him in all we do. Christ Jesus came into the world not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him.

The surest method to overcome and subdue an enemy is patience, forbearance, and kindness; these weapons will conquer when all others will fail. If thine enemy hunger, feed him, and if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

What would those give that are lost for ever to embrace the opportunities that a merciful God puts into your hands! But their day of grace is past; they neglected and despised the Saviour,—they refused to hearken to his gracious invitation to come unto him that they might have eternal life;—they are now in the flames, under the heavy pressure of the wrath of Almighty God, their companions devils, and the smoke of their torments arises for ever and ever. And oh! my dear friends, will you not earnestly strive to escape their misery?

Riches are the gifts of God; and those that fill useful and honourable situations in life, are appointed by a wise Providence for the good of mankind, and it is the will of God that honour and respect be paid to them.

The more holy we are, the more we strive to keep the commandments of God, the more we are enabled by divine grace to overcome the world, to walk by faith,

and have our conversation in heaven, the more peace and joy shall we have in believing, and the greater is the assurance of our salvation ; and although this is not the procuring cause of our salvation, yet this, being produced by faith, the true Christian will always consider it to be his duty to work out his salvation with fear and trembling.

FROM LUTHER.

Grace is not bestowed in order that work may be done oftener and more easily, but because without grace no work can be done from love.

It is a poor religion and a poor philosophy that throws man on his natural strength ; that so much vaunted strength of his has been tried for ages : yet, while man of himself has been enabled to make wonderful attainments in what relates to his earthly existence, he has never been able to dispel the darkness that hides the knowledge of God from his mind, or to change a single leaning of his heart. The highest degree of wisdom ever attained by ambitious minds, or of souls burning with the desire of perfection, has been to despair of themselves. The doctrine, then, which discovers to us our own powerlessness, while it tells us of a power from God by which we can do all things, is a generous, a consolatory, an absolutely true doctrine ; and great was the reformation which asserted the glory of heaven upon earth, and which pleads with man for the prerogatives of the mighty God.

If thou dost firmly believe these things, as thou oughtest to do, welcome thy still ignorant and erring brethren, as Jesus Christ hath welcomed thee ; patiently bear with them ; make their sins thine own ; and if thou hast any good, communicate it to them. ‘ Receive one another,’ says the apostle, ‘ as Christ hath received us, for the glory of God.’

That is a miserable righteousness that will not bear with others because it finds them bad, and thinks only of seeking the solitude of the wilderness, instead of doing them good by patience, by prayer, and by example. If thou beest the lily and rose of Christ, know that thy dwelling is among thorns; only beware lest, by thine impatience, thy rash judgments, and thy secret pride, thou dost thyself become a thorn. Christ reigns in the midst of His enemies; had He desired to dwell among the good, and to die for those only who loved Him, for whom I pray you would He have died, and among whom would He have dwelt?

The following remarks on the character of James Davies have been supplied by one who saw much of him at the Devauden:—His intellect was vigorous, his memory excellent, and his manner of relating anecdotes—with which his mind was well stored—was graphic. He was a great and general reader, but he liked those books the best, to use his own words, which spoke to him of the God of heaven, and conveyed to him that wisdom which is from above. He was very fond of Young's *Night Thoughts*, and he read passages from that work, with a very accurate perception of the sense, and a true relish for the beauty and harmony of the language. He was especially charmed by two passages, one of which relates to the value of the soul; and the other embodies the imagery

employed in the 21st verse of the 18th chapter of the 2nd Book of Kings, wherein the king of Egypt is described to king Hezekiah, by the cupbearer of the king of Assyria, as a bruised reed, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it. He never intruded into the mysteries of the Bible. He valued Burkitt's *Commentaries* beyond any other similar exposition of the New Testament. In his youth he used to carry into the fields a copy of Burkitt's work, which he borrowed for the purpose; and in after life, he divided his own copy of the *Commentaries* into several portions, which he lent to those who were likely to be interested by their perusal.

The Rev. David Jones, who was nominated by the incumbent of the parish of Newchurch to the perpetual curacy of the Devauden Chapel, on the consecration of the building in September, 1838, still continues to officiate in the chapel, where service is performed by him, either in the morning or afternoon of every Sunday. This service alternates with that at the parish church, and thus two full services, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, are provided in the parish every Lord's-day; and an evening



service is performed in the chapel by the parochial minister. The appointment of the Rev. David Jones to the curacy of the chapel was made at the suggestion of Bishop Copleston; who desired to manifest, in a suitable manner, the respect entertained for his father, the Rev. William Jones.

When James Davies had laboured for many years at the Devauden School; and the public services of the church had been long celebrated in the chapel with regularity and order, and to Christian edification—a local preacher of the Wesleyan body visited the district at stated seasons, and collected together a congregation close to the school and chapel.

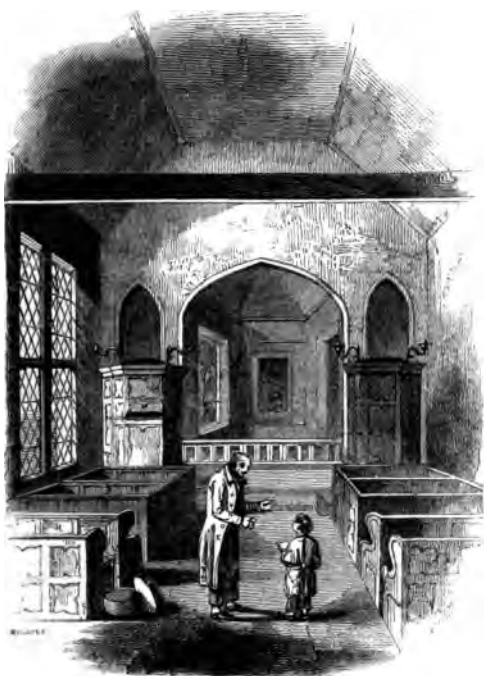
Bishop Copleston,—mindful that the founder of Wesleyan methodism had declared his adherence to the doctrine and discipline of the church of England; and—his desire that the religious community which he founded (whilst supplying the ordinances of religion and the means of public worship in neglected localities) should avoid any intrusion on the duly authorised ministers of the church, when faithfully discharging their allotted functions,—remonstrated with the president of the Wesleyan Conference on this aggres-

sive interference with Church authority, and violation of Christian unity.

His remonstrance was, however, unheeded ; and a Wesleyan chapel was erected at the Devauden ; and the following public censure of this proceeding was pronounced by the bishop, in the charge delivered by him to the clergy of the diocese of Llandaff, at the triennial visitation in October, 1845.

In speaking of the various sects which disturb and assail the Church, it is usual to distinguish the Wesleyans, as least hostile and as less actuated by party spirit than the rest. In their origin and during the lifetime of their founder, this may have been the case ; but a manifest change is observable at the present day. They are become, not only an organised body, but an independent sect, subject to an internal rule, like one of the monastic orders—a rule of human contrivance, having no pretension to apostolic authority—a rule which is frequently directed by a spirit of rivalry, seeking, not to supply spiritual wants in destitute or neglected places, but to counteract and subvert the ministrations of the Church, in places where they are most ably and faithfully performed, and most effective. I make not this charge lightly or without proof. In one gross instance of this kind, I went so far as to expostulate with the rulers of that body on the intended erection of a building for their purposes in a thinly peopled district, where a new church then stood, remarkably well served and fully attended. I represented this as a notorious departure from the principles

of their founder, and as an avowed act of opposition and schism ; but my remonstrance was wholly disregarded. Let us not cease, however, to strive, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, and to pray earnestly for the reunion of all wanderers from the true fold. And may the Lord whom you serve bless your labours, and support you under all discouragements and difficulties, with the power of His grace, and with the consolations of His holy Spirit.



INTERIOR OF DEVAUDEN CHAPEL..

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM JAMES.

‘He who afflicts me knows what I can bear ;
‘And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
‘Will mercifully take me to himself.’
So through the cloud of death his spirit passed
Into that pure and unknown world of love
Where injury cannot come.

TWO editions of the Memoir of James Davies contained a narrative of the last days of William James, who died at Kilgwrrwg, October 19, 1838, by James Davies, school-master of the Devauden : and in 1843 the old man published, at his own expense, and distributed gratuitously, a small tract containing a brief memoir of the last days of William James. He modestly said he had been over-persuaded to have this tract printed, and that it was made public with much misgivings, because he felt so strongly his own ignorance and inability to attempt such a work, but he thought it might be useful, and acceptable as a reward to school children.

That work, as published in 1843, will be given in this place:—

MEMOIR OF WILLIAM JAMES.

How various are the ways of the Lord God Almighty in the workings of his providence with mankind; how mysterious are his doings with his fallen creatures in the distribution of his grace, all ending in one grand design,—*the good of his people, and the salvation of souls*. Joseph's brethren, harbouring in their hearts envy, hatred, and malice against their innocent and unoffending brother, sold him a bond-slave into Egypt; but God Almighty, that brings good out of evil, overruled their malice to accomplish his intentions of mercy. Joseph is sent into Egypt to save the lives of his father and his brethren, together with the inhabitants of Egypt and the surrounding countries.

In looking back on many circumstances that have happened in the course of my life, and that gave me much sorrow and deep affliction at the time of their happening, yet now I can look back upon them all, and rejoice and thank God for every one of them: they were all necessary, not one too much, and God in mercy permitted me to be exercised with them. For although I hope that when I was young, (and it is with deep humility I say it) I had a small measure of the grace of God, yet there was much that was amiss, much that wanted to be amended,—pride, stubbornness, and self-will to be subdued: and perhaps one of the most difficult duties the Christian has to perform, is to set his affections on things above, to wean them from the transitory pleasures of time, and to rely for the accomplishing of this—wholly and solely—on the power of sovereign grace. For many years I have been endeavouring to perform this important duty; yet what

am I now—a poor unworthy sinner. Upon the strictest examination, I find I can place no hope of acceptance with God; no hope of eternal life, for anything I ever did, or what I am doing at the present, or ever hope to do. I feel I am imperfect, sin is mixed with all; my hopes are in the rich, the free, the unmerited mercies of God in Christ Jesus. But lest any persons should be led to make a perverse use of the unbounded mercies of the Saviour, and feel easy in their sins, I beg to assure all such, that it is my prayer to God, the desire of my heart, and endeavour of my life, to do the will of God, to keep his holy commandments and righteous laws, to hate and detest every sin, all that is hateful and abominable in his pure and holy sight. For how can I hope for any share in the mercies of the Saviour, if I live in the commission of those sins that crucified my Redeemer, and nailed him to the cross, and for the commission of which he has declared, *to shut out of heaven, and sink into the abyss of eternal and everlasting misery*. ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’—Matt. vii. 21—23.

There is another duty of the Christian which, from the corruption of our fallen nature, is most difficult and hard to be learned, but when the humble Christian is in possession of it, it brings peace and joy and happiness. This is giving up ourselves *wholly and entirely* and *without reserve* to the *disposal* and the *will of Almighty God*. Of all that has happened to me in the *course* of my long life, nothing has made so deep an

impression on my mind; as the leadings of the providence of the Almighty, in bringing me to the sick and dying bed of a dear youth. Here I have seen the promises of a faithful God fulfilled, 'they that seek me early shall find me,' and he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. If angels, those holy spirits who had no part in man's redemption, rejoiced at the Saviour's coming into the world to save his lost creatures, and restore them to the favour of God, so that they sung a hymn of praise to the Almighty, surely we have cause to rejoice, when we witness the blessed effects of the Saviour's coming into the world, and his conquest and victory over sin and Satan, the treachery of the human heart, and the ensnaring world, in the salvation of *one precious soul*.

In giving an account of this youth, I beg to assure every person into whose hands this may come, that I have no motive whatever for publishing these simple matters of fact, but feelings of kindness and regard to the memory of a dear and departed friend, and a most sincere desire to do good; and as example is more powerful to teach than precept, I sincerely hope that the blessing of God Almighty may follow even this weak attempt to be a lasting benefit to every one, who shall by this means be made acquainted with the real piety of this youth in his life, and the manner in which he was highly favoured of the Almighty in his death.

William, the son of Thomas and Alice James, of the parish of Kilgwrrwg, in the county of Monmouth, was born the 9th day of July, 1821. His father and mother were honest and very industrious people; they lived something more than a mile from me. William's mother instructed him and her other children to read, and was careful in keeping them from bad company, and in making them observe the Sabbath. I had no

particular acquaintance with William or his parents, but remember him repeatedly coming to church by himself when he was about ten years old, and sometimes he had his little brother with him, who was younger than himself, and died two years before him. I was very much delighted to see a child so young come to the house of God alone. I spoke kindly to him, and encouraged him. He told me in his last illness, that even at that time what he then heard in church had such an effect on him, that he has gone home bathed in tears, and that he really felt the power of religion when he was *twelve years old*.

His religious feelings were greatly deepened under a sermon about this time; and from this period he gave himself up more earnestly to prayer and the duties of religion, as far as the necessary business of a laborious life would permit. He was of a serious turn of mind; he took no delight in the pastimes and amusements that boys of his age are fond of, but he regularly attended places of worship whenever he had an opportunity. His father and mother told me he was a very dutiful child, and from every inquiry I have made of his neighbours and those who were acquainted with him, they all gave him the best of characters; and it was the opinion of one person that such another youth was not to be found. He was a person of very little discourse, plain and simple in his dress, diligent and industrious at his work, and charitable as far as it was in his power. When he was *ten years* old, his mother would send him to Chepstow, a distance of five miles from his home, to buy necessaries for the family, and would give him money to have something for himself to eat and drink; he would bring that money home, and when he had a small sum collected, he would give it to the Missionaries, and in other ways to promote the cause of religion. I once was in his company two

hours, and from the discourse we had I am persuaded he was a person of sound judgment and good understanding. He had a knowledge of the Scriptures, and the duties of a Christian, far beyond anything I could have expected. This is more to be admired, when we consider that this youth had very little time for reading and study, but he was given the best of all Teachers, even the Holy Spirit, that was preparing him for an early death, and that kingdom incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

The first time I entertained a good opinion of this youth's piety, was from what I heard from some of my neighbours, who have gone some miles from their homes to reap the corn where it was soonest ripe. William went with them to bind up the sheaves. They told me at night, when he thought they were asleep, he would be earnestly engaged in prayer, or singing a hymn; and that he would rise in the morning as soon as it was light, and when they were going to their work, they would behold him on his knees engaged in prayer. And often has he knelt down—in a wood or field, or some secluded place—to make known his requests to his heavenly Father, where he thought no eye could see him but the eye of his God. His father told me that in the morning, after he had been praying by his bedside, he would miss him for an hour, and when he came home the knees of his trousers would be wet, from his having kneeled down on the ground to pray. About eight weeks before his death, he caught a violent cold, that turned to an inflammation on the lungs, with an intense fever attending it. Three weeks before he exchanged time for eternity, his father came to me and said he had a favour to ask: his son was very dangerously ill, and very much desired to see me; he had expressed this wish before, but now he renewed his request with such earnestness, that his father came

at eight o'clock at night. This was the first time I had heard anything of his illness. I went directly, and found poor William reduced almost to skin and bones. He reached forth his poor hand, and seemed very glad to see me. After reading a chapter and praying, I left him for that night. I felt so much pity and affection for such a young creature, and a *choice Christian* under such bodily pain, that I sat up a great part of every night from that time to his death; and I thought myself greatly favoured to be permitted to show any mark of attention and kindness to an heir of glory and one of Christ's redeemed. The following night I asked him, if he rested all his hopes of pardon and salvation on *Christ alone*. He made me understand that was all his hope and dependance. Being persuaded he was a real Christian, I did very little more than pray with him, and comfort and support him with promises from God's holy Word. He was always particularly attentive to prayer; and although his fever was so severe that his flesh seemed in a broiling state, and he spent whole nights without ever closing his eyes, yet in all his sufferings I never heard him complain. Once he said, 'I wish I could go on my knees to pray.' I replied, 'My dear fellow, the desires of your heart are as acceptable to God as if you were able to kneel down.' He would pray earnestly, 'Lord, help me.' 'My dear fellow, God will help you; he will never leave nor forsake his suffering child; wait a little while, and he will take you to himself, where pain and sickness can never come.' At another time, 'Lord, give me more faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.' At another time, 'Lord, give me a clean heart.' Sometimes in his greatest sufferings he would clasp his hands, and lift them up, saying, 'Let us rejoice.' 'My dear fellow, you will rejoice in a little time in a manner you have never yet done.' He was once overheard in earnest

prayer, and one sentence he made use of could not be surpassed for beauty or simplicity: 'Lord, I am but a child.' 1 Kings iii. 7. He expressed himself very thankful to me for my attention to him. At one time he said, 'I am so glad to have you by me, you tell me such things.' But towards the latter part of his illness, from suffering and weakness, he took very little notice of those attending him. About a fortnight before his death he said to his mother, 'I have heard music, and I have seen three or four companies in white.' At another time he said to his mother, after sleeping some time, 'It will not be long before I am with the angels.' He appeared for some time to be getting better. His distressed father and mother rejoiced in the hope that he would recover. When he understood this he said, '*I do not wish to live, I had rather die*; if I should recover I might fall back to the world.' When I witnessed his sufferings and restlessness, I prayed earnestly to the Lord that he would remove his pains, and give him ease and rest; and the Lord God Almighty in mercy abated the violence of his fever, and he had more ease for a week or nine days before his death. He continued to grow weaker and weaker to his death.

The last night that he lived he had the full use of his reason, and so far as I am able to judge, possessed his understanding quite as well as ever he had it during his whole life. On this night a great alteration took place in him. He was so very different from what he had been throughout the whole of his illness, or even in his health; his countenance was so calm, and such sweetness in it, and very often clothed in smiles. His last hours were his happiest, for now he seemed to be above his sufferings, above the world and all its concerns. He was so weak for a considerable time before his death, that he could not put anything to drink to his mouth, but this night he was remarkably quick in all

his movements. He put his hands one in the other, and with great quickness raised them above his head, and said, '*Praise God.*' He reached out his hand to his uncle, and said, 'You do not pray always.' 'No, Billy,' he replied, 'I do not.' After this he placed my hand in his, and in the kindest manner squeezed it for four or five minutes, and with his other hand drew me quite close up to him. Afterwards he looked up to the top of the room three several times, and looking straight before him with great earnestness, and touching my face, he pointed with his finger as if for me to look in that direction. I have no doubt but the glorious messengers sent from heaven were then appearing before him. He said to his father, 'I shall have a fine journey to heaven this morning.' He died about a little before seven o'clock. About four o'clock the same morning he put one of his feet out of bed, and raising up his arms with great quickness, and looking up, he said, '*Oh father! there is the Lord Jesus Christ; help me to go and meet him.*'

Immediately before his death he cried out, looking in his usual way, '*Yonder they be come.*' These were his last words, and sweetly smiling he died without a struggle or a groan. His warfare is accomplished, his victory is won; he has now entered into the joy of his Lord. His remains lie buried in Newchurch churchyard, where there is a stone erected to his memory.

And now, my dear friends, for whose sake this Memoir has been published, but especially my young friends, who of all others are nearest to my heart, let me earnestly beg and entreat you to follow the example of this dear youth as he followed Christ. He was young like yourselves, but his youth was given to his God. God loved him, and gave him his Holy Spirit; God loves you, and will give you the same Spirit; if you, with earnest prayer, ask him for grace to withstand

the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This youth died in faith, and is now in glory. You must die; yes, and die alone. Oh, do not lay down this little Tract without praying from your heart to God, that you may die the death of the righteous, and that your last end may be like the closing scene of William James. Then I will rejoice that I wrote this Memoir, and you will rejoice that you read it: and be assured you never will repent the day on which you gave up your heart unto God, or the hour that you asked for the aid of the Holy Ghost.

Thus ends the published tract; but in a manuscript of the memoir, which was found amongst the old man's papers after his death, is the following passage:—

His remains lie buried in Newchurch churchyard. There is a stone erected to his memory, containing, on the one half of the stone, inscriptions for two of his brothers, one of whom died in his infancy, and the other in his eleventh year—two years before William's death. On William's part of the stone is as follows,—In memory of William, son of Thomas and Alice James, of the parish of Kilgwrrwg, who died October the 9th, 1838, aged 17 years and 3 months. Under this is the following passage:—He was a real and choice Christian, devoted to the duties of religion, and spent much time in prayer; and such was the merciful and gracious dealings of his heavenly Father towards him, that in the near approach of death, and in the prospect of eternity, his mind was filled with peace, and joy, and love; his death was most happy and blessed.

On the upper part of the stone is a book, containing the following portion of God's word:—'Thanks be to

God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Under all is the following:—'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'

This inscription was written by James Davies, and the stone was put up at his expense; and when he first wrote the memoir of his young friend, that memoir contained the following passage:—'His poor body was buried in Newchurch churchyard, and I hope, when I am dead, that my body will be laid in the same grave beside his body; for, poor fellow, I shall never forget him.'

This passage was omitted in 1843,—not that his affection had undergone any change, but it is probable the design had then been formed, which he afterwards executed, of removing to the scene of his childhood; and as he had selected a final resting place, first at Kilgwrrwg, and afterwards at Newchurch, so when he removed to Llangattock, he chose in the churchyard of that parish a spot where his body should be committed to the ground, when he had rested from his labours, and his spirit had returned to God who gave it.





NEW CHURCH. CHURCH.



One proof of the attachment of James Davies for William James remains to be mentioned. For eleven years, the old man treasured with affectionate care the clothes of the young man for whom he had felt a love, touching as that of David for Jonathan; and when his own death was not distant, he requested that they might be buried with him.

His commands in this respect were faithfully obeyed; and the clothes of William James were folded and placed in the coffin under the head of James Davies.

CHAPTER V.

LLANGATTOCK-LINGOED.

Ah! why in age
Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood—but that there the soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigour.

THE life of man is a pilgrimage : his years threescore and ten, and if he be so strong as to come to fourscore years, his strength then is but labour and sorrow. Yet the years of James Davies exceeded fourscore when he resolved to depart from the Devauden; not to seek that rest, for which age yearns, but to encounter increased difficulties, undertake heavier labours, and seek amongst strangers his last earthly home. It is not known when this important change was first contemplated by the old man; but it is probable that for some years he had regarded the time of his continuance at the Devauden as uncertain. He was not exempt from crosses and trials. A temper naturally hasty, and a

spirit ever ardent in the pursuit of good, and impatient of those hindrances, which impede the path of the earnest labourer in his Master's vineyard, exposed him to mortifications; and he did not always meet with entire sympathy from some of those with whom he was associated. Devauden, however, had been to him a scene of remarkable usefulness. He had spent there more than thirty years of his valuable life. His labours in that neglected spot had received a large share of that blessing for which he daily prayed; and he was in the neighbourhood of some kind friends, who affectionately ministered to his few earthly necessities. However, on this, as on every occasion of his life, the only consideration with the venerable Christian was,—how shall I best promote God's glory and man's happiness?

Mention has been made of his ordinary habit during the harvest season, when his school was broken up, to travel on foot to a distance from his home,—with Bibles, Testaments, Prayer-books, and religious tracts of a suitable character; which he distributed gratuitously in cottages and farm-houses, and every year he spent several pounds in this work of Christian charity. In the summer of 1847, as well as in some

former years, he selected for his benevolent labours the parish of Llangattock - Lingoed, distant fifteen miles from the Devauden. This parish adjoins Grosmont ; and the farmhouse at Blaen-Trothy, in which he was born, is on the confines of Llangattock, and within two miles of the parish church. In the village of Grosmont there is a national school, for which a small endowment has been provided ; but this is several miles from the church of Llangattock, and therefore not easily accessible to the population of that parish.

Lying near the foot of a remarkable hill, known as the Holy Mountain, (from a local tradition that it was rent at the crucifixion of our Lord ;) removed but a short distance from the deep vale of Ewias, where the ruins of the once stately Abbey of Llanthony mark the spot on which stood of yore the humble cell of Saint David, the patron saint of Wales ; apart from the great public thoroughfares, by which the county of Monmouth is intersected ; with no resident gentry or resident clergyman, and thus deprived in great measure of pastoral superintendence and of lay guidance ; without a school for the young, or adequate pastoral ministrations for the adult population,—the parish of

Llangattock-Lingoed attracted the attention, and enlisted the Christian sympathies, of the village schoolmaster. He had worshipped in early life in the parish church ; had received within its walls some of, if not all, his school learning ; had played when a boy in the churchyard ; and, although a generation had since grown up which knew him not, the spot exercised on his imagination that undefinable influence, which early recollections exert at the close of life.

In a letter addressed to the aged widow of his former friend and fellow-labourer at the Devauden, with whom after her removal to Hereford he corresponded, and whom he occasionally visited, he thus wrote in the month of August, 1847 :—

I am going to Llangattock-Lingoed, near to the place where I was born, to supply the poor cottagers, and such servants as can read, with Bibles, Testaments, Prayer-books, and tracts. I have difficulties on my mind how I may do it in the best way it ought to be done. God Almighty give me heavenly wisdom to do all to His glory, and according to His will. If I can manage that business so as to have time, I will come from thence to Hereford.

The following letter to his sister, Mrs. Marshall, written after his return to Devauden, furnishes some interesting particulars of his visit,

and show the early associations which it had recalled to his memory :—

Devauden School, September 9th, 1847.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I am truly glad to hear you are better. God deals very mercifully with you in giving you so many warnings: I hope you will make the best use of them in seeking earnestly His mercy, and devoting the remainder of your time in His service and to His glory, and doing all you can to provide for the eternal world. I have been to Llangattock the last week, and took with me thirty-six Bibles, twenty-four Prayer-books, and twelve Testaments and tracts, to give to poor cottagers that could read; and, from all I could see, they were much wanting, and I hope I may be able at Christmas to send them the worth of two pounds of the best and most suitable publications on religious subjects I can lay hold of. All your old acquaintances are gone—Bethel and Vaughan and their wives are dead. I gave a Bible to Bethel's son. Only Jack Pritchard, of all the old standards, is living. The public-house has been rebuilt, and my brother Edward's grandson owns it, and lives in it: and, by some means, he has a considerable property. He is single, and rents what James Price used to rent. He keeps seven cows, and has bought several places in Llangattock: he is Nelly's son, and his name is James Jones. I slept two nights in his house; he was useful to me, helping me to give the books away. Ransley House is all in ruins, and I am very sorry for it. It was an old family mansion belonging to our family. I have been with some of our relations on my mother's side: they are decent, respectable, well-disposed people, and are in very comfortable circumstances. I suppose Mr. Johnson you mention is a gentleman who has sent two pounds

towards the endowment of our church. He is a stranger to me. When you write let me know who he is. Wishing you your health, I remain, your brother,

JAMES DAVIES.

Subjoined to that letter is an affectionate note to a grandson of Mrs. Marshall, the only relative who continued to reside with the aged widow.

MY VERY DEAR HENRY,

I am very glad to hear the good account your aunt gives of you, and I am thankful to you for writing to me. My dear Henry, I shall give you a very few words of advice. Pray to God earnestly and regularly to give you His heavenly grace, His holy Spirit and wisdom from above. If you do this I am certain you will be everything I could wish you to be. The promise of God is, 'They that seek me early shall find me.' Please to remember me kindly to Mr. Newel, and please to remember me to Mr. Camplin, and give my love to your father and mother; and, my dear Henry, I remain, yours most affectionately,

JAMES DAVIES.

A letter written soon afterwards to his niece, Judith Thorley, shows how constantly his thoughts now dwelt on the peculiar destitution of the inhabitants of Llangattock, and his resolution to become the teacher of the poor children, whom he had seen grow up without Christian instruction.

Devauden School, November 18th, 1847.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I received your letter, and I am at all times glad to hear from you. It is at the Christian Know-

ledge Society's depository you will have the book you mentioned. I am glad to hear my sister is better. When you write next give a particular account of the person you mentioned to be in want. It is not in my power, at the present time, to assist her; when I can I shall be glad to do anything in my power. What a pity it is that my sister, who has it so well in her power, does not relieve the wants of one so near to her. I have been to Llangattock with Bibles and Testaments and Prayer-books, to give to the poor of that place, and I believe there is no place to be found where the inhabitants have less means of religious instruction. There is no person of education and fortune in the parish, no resident clergyman, no school, nor Sunday-school; it is my intention to leave Devauden and go there, and do all I can to instruct and teach the poor children.

My dear Niece,
I remain affectionately, your Uncle,
JAMES DAVIES.

On his return from Llangattock, early in September, 1847, he disclosed to Archdeacon Crawley his anxious wish that a school should be established in that parish—a desire which the Archdeacon readily seconded. Prompt measures were taken to carry out the project, and the old man's motives and proceedings are well described in the following letters:—

To Archdeacon Crawley.

Devauden School, October 13th, 1847.

HONOURED AND VERY DEAR SIR,

I am greatly rejoiced to hear matters are going on so prosperously at Llangattock. God Almighty be

praised that has put it in the hearts of those worthy individuals to come forward, and by their generosity and exertions to be a lasting blessing to that destitute and long neglected place. And I am under a great obligation to you for the part you have taken in it; God Almighty abundantly bless and reward you. After the turn of Christmas, I shall be going to Llangattock with some tracts and books; I will then call on Mr. Rodney and give my £5, and I will represent the wants of that place to others, and whatever help I may have shall be given up to Mr. Rodney, to dispose of as he shall think best. * * * * has two estates in the parish, not worth less, I should think, than £150 a year, —I hope she may give something handsome; and there are people of property in the parish that ought to assist. Most happy shall I be, whenever the building is completed, to fulfil my engagement, and immediately to enter upon the duties of the school.

I hope Mrs. Crawley and Miss Parry are well, and your dear amiable little ones; please to give my love to them. I hope your life may long be spared to continue a blessing to very many.

Dear Sir, I remain,

Your much obliged and very humble Servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

To the Rev. J. C. Prosser, Vicar of Newchurch.

Devauden School, November 30th, 1847.

REVEREND SIR,

You wish to know why I should have a desire to leave Devauden, and most gladly will I acquaint you with every circumstance respecting it.

I was at Llangattock-Lingoed the beginning of last September, with Bibles and Testaments and Prayer-books, to give to the poor cottagers of that parish, and

very much was I distressed to see the destitute state of that place. No minister living in the parish, nor any person of fortune or education ; no school, no Sunday-school ; no person to teach the poor dear children to know the Saviour, nor impress on their minds the duty of loving, fearing, and serving Almighty God. When I have seriously thought of that parish it has caused me to shed tears. I represented to Archdeacon Crawley how much a school was wanting in that parish. He spoke to the Honourable Mr. Rodney, Llanvihangel Court, whose brother is vicar of the parish. He said his brother and himself would do anything they could, but I feared that with a little talk nothing might be done in order to forward the business. I proposed to Mr. Crawley, that if a school should be built, so that there might be a prospect of its being a lasting benefit to the place, I would give £5 to assist in the building, and I would come and do all I could to teach the poor children without any salary or pay whatever. Mr. Crawley wrote to tell me that Mr. Rodney had subscribed £10, and he will further give as much timber as will be wanting to build a school and a house. The vicar will give £10, and the curate £5. With my £5, and what may be had from the School Building Societies, will make a good beginning.

If I shall leave Devauden, I beg to assure you, Sir, and every other person, that all I have in view is to make myself useful, and endeavour to do good where it is so much wanting. I am very certain I shall put myself under difficulties, and I shall be very sorry to part with several kind affectionate children I have in school, and I shall put myself out of the way of many kind friends ; but if the Almighty will enable me to do good in ever so small a measure, it will, to me, be a rich payment ; and I am persuaded that my leaving Devauden will make room for some person with better abilities,

and better educated than I am, and who will do more good and be more useful than ever I have been.

I remain, reverend Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

JAMES DAVIES.*

From Archdeacon Crawley to Sir Thomas Phillips.

Bryngwyn Rectory.

MY DEAR SIR THOMAS,

I have not forgotten the account I promised you, of the proposal made to me by James Davies, the good old schoolmaster of Devauden. On the 30th of August last, I had a visit from him. He was on his way to Abergavenny to purchase Bibles and Prayer-books at the depository of the Christian Knowledge Society, which he proposed to take to Llangattock-Lingoed, for gratuitous distribution among the farmers' servants and labourers of that parish, on the confines of which he was born, and passed his early life. He has been accustomed for years to employ the harvest

* In justice to the officiating minister of Llangattock, who holds the cure of that parish as well as of Llanvihangel, and who has been visited with trials of no ordinary kind, it should be stated, that on being apprized of the desire of James Davies to establish the school, he contributed to that object according to his means; that when Llangattock became the scene of the old man's labours, they were valued and encouraged by the pastor; and that since the aged Christian has been removed by death, the curate of Llangattock has actively co-operated in the efforts which have been made for providing an endowment for the school.

season, when his school at the Devauden is dispersed for a month's holiday, in conveying books and tracts to some part or another of the county in which he takes an interest, and Llangattock-Lingoed was this year the place of his choice for the exercise of this annual bounty. I saw him on his homeward return on the following Friday, when he expressed much interest about the parish which he had visited, and in which he had spent two days in distributing three dozen Bibles and as many Prayer-books. He lamented that there was no school, either on Sunday or during the week, for the instruction of the children, and begged me to see what could be done to establish one; saying that he would willingly subscribe one pound annually towards its support.

On the 24th of September I called upon him, on my way over the Devauden, when he expressed his satisfaction at the opportunity, which he had greatly desired, of again speaking to me on the subject of a school at Llangattock-Lingoed, which, as he said, had occupied his thoughts ever since his recent visit to that place.

He then proposed (if a school could be built at Llangattock) to give up his present situation at Devauden, worth about twenty-five pounds per annum,—to which, he remarked, a more capable person than himself might be appointed,—to remove to Llangattock, and to occupy the new school-room there, and teach the children without requiring any payment for his services.

I pointed out to him what a great change this would make in his arrangements and habits, and that it was not a step to be taken without consideration. He said he was aware of that, and had thought much upon it, but that his object was to establish a school at Llangattock, which may be carried on after his days; adding, 'I cannot tell, but perhaps God may have spared

my life thus long that I may be enabled to go and do some good there.'

He subsequently told me that he thought he had enough to maintain him during the remainder of his life, and that he would gladly contribute five pounds towards building the new school at Llangattock, and begged me to make his proposal known to the clergyman and gentry of the place, and especially to Mr. Rodney, of Llanvihangel, and to let him know the result as soon as I could ascertain it.

The energy of this truly Christian character is as remarkable, as the self-denial by which he is enabled to do more with his single talent than others with their ten.

He is now in the 83rd year of his age, of which the last thirty years have been spent at Devauden; where a chapel of ease—endowed and consecrated—a school-room, and dwelling-house for the master, are the apparent fruits of his own labour, and of the interest excited in others by his patient continuance in the occupation which he had chosen for himself,—that of teaching the children of his poor neighbours, and promoting, in every way in his power, their temporal as well as spiritual good.

His present object is, as I trust, in the way to be accomplished.

The vicar of Llangattock and the curate have both entered warmly into the proposal, which has also been taken up with much interest by Mr. Rodney, of Llanvihangel-Crucorney, who has promised to promote the undertaking in every way in his power.

As soon as a site has been settled, and a plan and estimate obtained, you shall hear from me again. In the meantime any assistance you can procure will be needed, for there are no persons of wealth in the parish of Llangattock, and little can be expected from

the tenants but the use of their teams, which will, I believe, be freely given, in collecting materials for the building.

I am, very faithfully, yours,

WILLIAM CRAWLEY.

When his niece, Judith Thorley, learnt her uncle's intention to remove to Llangattock, and labour for the remainder of his life without any wages, she wrote to offer him assistance, although by so doing she would deprive herself of a small provision which, out of her wages as a domestic servant, she had been enabled to make for her own future wants.

That offer produced the following letter :—

MY VERY DEAR NIECE,

I really do not know how to express myself sufficiently thankful to you for your kind offer, and how much I am rejoiced to find such truly Christian feelings and disposition in you. From this time I shall esteem you more than a relation—a dear Christian friend; but, my dear Judith, with many thanks to you, God Almighty has so provided for me, and I believe for this very purpose, that I hope to go on with my undertaking, and be able to support myself as long as I shall want. I shall first state to you my reasons for going to Llangattock, and afterwards let you know what I have to support me after going there. After I had determined to go to Llangattock, Mr. Prosser, our clergyman, was much offended, and insisted to know what reason I had for doing so. I explained to him in the best manner I could, and he was quite satisfied, but he desired me to *write down my reason for leaving Devauden, which I*

did, and, quite unexpected to me, this letter was printed and circulated, and has been the cause of a subscription being had of upwards of £300 towards building a school and house, and towards its future support; so that there is the prospect of its becoming a lasting benefit to that parish and neighbourhood.* As to what I have to support me after going there, a gentleman gave me £100, which I have upon interest, and that I suppose may be enough to support me as long as I shall want a support, and to enable me to buy books for the school, and books to lend and give to the inhabitants. If you conveniently can, let my sister Mary see this letter. I answered her questions, but gave her no explanation; but this will be a sufficient explanation to her.

My very dear Judith, I remain, your uncle,
JAMES DAVIES.

Whilst this preliminary work was in hand, and before the building was commenced, the old man resolved to make another journey to Llangattock in the winter of 1847-8; and on this occasion he met with adventures not common to him, and somewhat embarrassing to one who was then in the 83rd year of his age.

His load as usual consisted of Testaments, Prayer-books, and religious tracts, purchased at the Chepstow depository of the Society for

* The sum here named includes grants amounting to £75, made by the National Society, the Committee of Council on Education, and the Board of Education for the Archdeaconry of Monmouth.

Promoting Christian Knowledge; and thus laden, and somewhat resembling the itinerant dealers, to whose fraternity he had formerly belonged, he presented himself at the house of one, who took a warm interest in his benevolent schemes at Llangattock. His modest knock at the door was answered by a man servant who knew him not, and would not announce him to his master, unless informed of the nature of his business, which the old man refused to explain. He stood for some time at the door, until driven away by a keen wind. His anger burnt up suddenly and strongly, but was appeased by an early and ample explanation; and the gentleman, from whose door the old man had been thus most unintentionally driven, watched over his closing years with the affection of an early friend.

On his way back from Llangattock to the Devauden, he called at the house of Archdeacon Williams, where he was received with that hospitable welcome to which he was accustomed; but every room in the parsonage at Llanvapley was occupied, and the old man resolved to proceed on his journey, although the hour was late. A carriage was provided for him, to be *driven* by the archdeacon's servant; but in

one of those hilly roads, by which alone it is possible to approach the Archdeacon of Llandaff's house, a wheel gave way, and James Davies got out of the carriage, in a road to which he was a stranger, far from his destination, in a dark night—no very enviable position for one who was more than eighty-two years of age, weary from the labours of the day. Having walked alone in darkness for nearly an hour, he discerned a faint light, in the direction of which he proceeded, and reached a lonely cottage, occupied by a poor widow, from whom he learnt that he had a long way to go, and could scarcely hope to find his road. The poor widow invited him to rest in her house for the night, on a temporary bed, which she undertook to prepare; and seated by a cheerful fire, he produced from his wallet a supply of tea and sugar, of which both partook with joy and thankfulness.

The next morning he walked to Archdeacon Crawley's, by whom he was sent homewards; and on his first visit to Chepstow, he purchased a new Testament, in large type, for the widow by whom he had been lodged.

The only country gentleman who resides on his estate, in the neighbourhood of Llangattock, is the Honourable William Powell Rodney,

of Llanvihangel Court, in the adjoining parish of Llanvihangel, and whose brother is vicar of Llangattock, but resides on other preferment in the diocese of Hereford. Mr. Rodney entered zealously into James Davies's benevolent plans, and not only contributed of his own means, but devoted his time to the work; although not a landowner in Llangattock, nor connected with the parish by any direct claims of duty. Subscriptions were received from various quarters, some of them distant; and a few of those early friends, who had aided the old man's labours at the Devauden, contributed now to further his last work.

The glebe fortunately afforded a convenient site, near to the parish church; and an acre of land was conveyed by the vicar for a school-room and teacher's residence.

It was resolved that the building should be called 'James Davies' School,' and that the first stone should be laid by himself, after a service in the parish church. The Wednesday in Easter week, being the 26th April, 1848, was selected for the ceremonial; and on that morning the farmers and cottagers, with their children, and several of the neighbouring clergy and gentry, assembled in the church of Llan-

gattock. The appointed service was read by the curate, the Rev. John Price; and a sermon, remarkable for its justness of view and appositeness of allusion, was preached by Archdeacon Crawley, from the well-known words uttered by Pharaoh's daughter to the mother of Moses, 'Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.' Exodus ii. 9.

A procession was then formed to the ground, where the minister and people alternately repeated the 127th Psalm.

Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it.

Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Lo, children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.

Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Then was the stone laid by the old man; and no one who was present can forget the picture

of the venerable disciple of his Lord and Master, as with head uncovered, his few remaining hairs waving in the wind, he knelt upon the ground, surrounded by the children whom it would be his delight to train in that building;—nor will the affecting tone be forgotten with which he uttered these words of solemn import, —‘To the honour of Almighty God I lay the foundation-stone of this school, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.’

The minister then offered the following prayers:—

O, Most Glorious and Blessed Lord God, who dwellest on high, but beholdest all things below, look down, we humbly beseech Thee, upon the work we have this day begun, and pour out Thy blessing upon it. Accept, O Lord, this solemn dedication of our labours to Thee, and prosper the designs of us Thy servants to Thine own glory, and the edification of our brethren. Regard with Thine especial favour all who shall be engaged in this work, and graciously preserve them from all dangers and accidents; that labouring in Thy fear, and being always under the protection of Thy good Providence, they may prosperously complete the work that has been given them to do, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We yield Thee humble thanks, O Heavenly Father, that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee. Increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give us

Thy Holy Spirit, that being born again and made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we may continue Thy servants and attain Thy promises, through the same Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

The assembly afterwards joined in singing the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 9th verses of the new version of the Eighth Psalm.

The people were then dismissed with the apostolical benediction: and by many of the poor was it afterwards told, that a good old man and self-denying Christian would come to labour in that building; and there teach children in the ways and works of godliness, with no other wages than such as his Heavenly Father would lay up for his faithful servant.

His sister, to whom he had made known his intention, not only to labour at Llangattock without wages, but also to supply the school children as well as the poor of the parish with books at his own cost,—wrote to him to express her great surprise at this arrangement, and questioned him on his means of living in a manner which excited the old man's displeasure, and produced the following letter, which he addressed to her a short time before he left the Devauden.

Devauden School, September 15, 1848.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I was very glad to receive your letter, as it will give me an opportunity of explaining myself, which I shall be very glad to do. You ask me how I am to live, which certainly is very kind of you, for it would seem you are under a concern for my comfort and well-being. A gentleman gave me £100, which I have upon interest, and it is very likely it may support me as long as a support may be wanting. You may indeed find fault with me for acting in this way, but if I had not made these proposals, it is very likely a school would not have been built at Langattock, and you know what a neglected place it has been, and you cannot but rejoice that something is doing to benefit it. I am very willing to bear all the blame you may lay upon me; but let me seriously ask you, is it nothing that the dear children of that place should be taught their duty to God and man; and that it should be impressed on their minds that Christ Jesus came into the world, and bled and died to save sinners, and to redeem them from eternal misery? I should think Robert Thorley has our father's Bible, but I believe I can tell you your age. Since the 23rd of last month I have entered upon my 84th year, and you are two years younger than me; and from all that I can remember you and I were born in the same month—that is, in August—and you have entered upon your 82nd year. Thank you for your kind inquiries after my health—I am quite recovered, but I am something weaker than I was.

I remain, your brother,

JAMES DAVIES.

Before he left the Devauden he received gratifying proofs of affection from some who had benefited by his labours at that place; and he

distributed to many of his former friends, copies of a work published by the Rev. Joseph Jones, M.A., called 'The Book for the Young, or an Invitation to Early Piety,' of which he said, 'I wish the book was in the hands of every person in the kingdom, who would make a good and proper use of it.'

Before he left, he expressed his sense of decreasing strength, but was grateful for the ability still left him to do a little good. In a letter written to his niece, Judith Thorley, on the 2nd August, 1848, is the following passage :—'I have been very ill, and am now in a very weak state—I am hardly able to write. I shall be going to Llangattock in the harvest, and then it will be determined what time I shall leave Devauden. The most I can expect to do is to make a beginning and die.'

He was presented by the teachers of the Chepstow Church National and Sunday Schools, with a memoir of the Rev. Charles Simeon, which was transmitted to him by the vicar of the parish, as a token of their affectionate remembrance, accompanied by the following letter :—

Chepstow, August 5, 1848.

MY DEAR AGED FRIEND,

I have been asked by the teachers of my National and Sunday schools, to discharge a very

pleasing duty in begging you to accept from them the enclosed Memoir of the Rev. C. Simeon. This united token of our love and esteem for you was determined upon on an occasion when lately the teachers spent two evenings in Christian intercourse at my house. We trust that when in the providence of God you shall be removed from our neighbourhood, it will serve to remind you of a small company of young people who are engaged in the same '*work of faith and labour of love*' in which you have been permitted to spend so large a portion of your life. May it lead you often to lift up the voice of supplication in their behalf! And believe me you will not be forgotten by us in your proposed new undertaking at Llangattock. May you be abundantly blessed in your exertions; and if through increasing age and infirmities you may not be permitted to see the harvest of your labours, yet may you be permitted fully and faithfully to sow the seed.

I am, my dear friend,

Your fervent well-wisher,

J. B. GABRIEL.

Archdeacon Crawley having inquired how he meant to live at Llangattock without wages, he replied that he still retained the sum of £100, which had been given him ten years before by the Rev. Dr. Warneford, for his support in old age:—that £14 yearly would be enough for his own wants; that £3 would supply books for his school, and £3 would be needed for other charities in the parish; and that by thus limiting his whole expenditure to £20 a year, he would possess a provision for five years.

The school buildings at Llangattock were completed in the autumn of 1848, at a cost of £254 19s. 4d.; and they comprise a schoolroom for 45 children, with a convenient residence for the master.

The sums raised for the building were :—

| | | | |
|--|-------|----|----|
| Subscriptions | £231 | 11 | 10 |
| Grant from the Committee of Council . . | 45 | 0 | 0 |
| Grant from the National Society | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Grant from the Monmouth Board of Education | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| | <hr/> | | |
| | £306 | 11 | 10 |

Over the entrance door of the schoolroom is the following inscription, carved in stone :—

1848

JAMES



DAVIES.

The old man arrived at Llangattock on the 28th October, 1848, and on the 6th November he opened the school, which was attended, on an average, by 40 children. The school was altogether free, and the good schoolmaster not only took no payment from any one for his services,

but provided the books and school necessities at his own cost.

The walls of the house were damp when he arrived, and Mr. Rodney arranged with Mr. and Mrs. Evans, by whom the vicarage house is occupied, and who farm a few acres of land, to receive, and lodge, and attend upon him. This considerate arrangement rendered the close of his life very comfortable, and he seems to have been really happy at Llangattock.

The following letter was written to his friend Mr. Church, soon after his arrival :—

Llangattock-Lingoed, December 2nd, 1848.

MY VERY DEAR MR. CHURCH,

I am now very comfortably settled, and everything goes on very happily ; I have kindness shown me from every quarter ; the children are more manageable than at Devauden.

I should be glad to have two dozen of your large steel pens, and a dozen of the Hymn-books, and six copies of the ' Golden Sayings of the Wise King ;' and I will, by some means, send you the money.

The children go on so very well in learning their hymns, and in other respects, that I must give them rewards at Christmas. I have every reason to hope that God will bless the endeavour that is used for the good of the children, and of some of the inhabitants of the place ; at least I am very glad I came here.

Please to remember me to all my kind friends, and

to Mrs. Church and all your family; and with many thanks to you, my dear Mr. Church, for all favours,

I remain,

Your much obliged and very humble Servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

From the time of his arrival at Llangattock until the Christmas following, the whole of his time which was not spent in the school was employed in visits to the cottagers,—reading to some, and leaving books with others, and making strict inquiries of all as to their attendance at church.

In a letter to his niece, written from Llangattock, on the 29th December, 1848, he writes : —‘I have been here two months, and I have every reason to hope the school will be a great benefit to this place. I am treated very kindly by every person, and I am very well in health.’

The affectionate interest with which he was regarded by his aged friend, Mrs. Jones, the widow of his former pastor, and the zealous co-adjutor in some of his plans of Christian benevolence, is feelingly indicated in the following letter, written to dissuade him from a journey contemplated in the winter of 1849, from Llangattock to Hereford, on foot, a distance of twenty miles.

Barton, 2nd November.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I cannot refrain writing, though I don't know your address, just to say I cannot think of your intended journey here at Christmas without much fear, and because it is a dangerous time of the year. I hope you will consider the risk you will run, and the unhealthy state of the country just at this period; and it would be wiser to postpone your visit to a season more suited to old age.

I hope you have not suffered from going into the house where you are. I can say it is well it is in thine heart; but we must make use of the faculties God has given, and not rush rashly to work. I believe the Almighty has done, and will do, great things for you, because you seek his blessing upon your endeavours: and, oh! may an abundance of His riches in Christ Jesus be in store for you, and if it is His blessed will, may you see the work you have begun prosper,—and to Him shall be all the praise.

May we abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Let hope cheer our hearts as to a glorious issue. Amen.

When you can write I shall be glad to hear of your health, and when addressing your Heavenly Father remember your sincere friend,

SARAH JONES.

The following letter, addressed to the same aged friend, shows the hopefulness with which he regarded the school at Llangattock. It also evinces how grievously he was disappointed at the employment of a dame as his successor at the

Devauden school, which he contemplated with the same affectionate interest he ever had done, although his own personal superintendence was withdrawn.

Llangattock-Lingoed, April 2nd, 1849.

HONOURED AND VERY DEAR MADAM,

I am truly glad to hear from you, and I wish your health was better. I am near about the same as I used to be, but I have very little strength to do work. I hope the school at Llangattock is and will do much good, and I sincerely hope God is blessing it; without that, all that can be done will profit nothing. I planted an orchard of about one hundred trees, under the impression that, in time to come, they will help to support the school. I have been under great concern for the school at Devauden, and did all I could to have a person that truly fears God. The salary being too little, I represented the matter to 'Squire Williams, of Llangibby; he offered to raise a subscription of ten pounds a year, which would have been quite sufficient.* Mr. Crawley sent the proposal to Mr. Prosser, and he refused to have any person but a woman, who is by no means capable; but God, in his own good time, will provide for that place. I hope to come to Hereford next harvest, if your life and mine are spared. I shall always feel very thankful to you for your kindness to

* This representation to Mr. Williams occurred at Llangibby, on an occasion to which allusion will be made in the following page, and was made in reply to inquiries from him as to the future prospects of the school at Devauden, in which, in common with so many other persons, Mr. Williams felt an interest.

me. I value and esteem you in my heart for your truly Christian conduct to the poor and distressed. The God of heaven abundantly bless and reward you. Honoured madam,

I remain, your very humble Servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

The mention of the offer of Mr. Williams of Llangibby, to raise by subscription an addition to the stipend for a schoolmaster at Devauden, in order thereby to secure the efficiency of the school, will prepare the reader for a day spent at that gentleman's house, on the 1st November, 1848, when the old man laid the foundation-stone of a church to be erected in the neighbourhood, at the sole cost of two ladies. This narrative is from the pen of Archdeacon Crawley:—

I promised you an account of James Davies' visit to Llangibby, for the purpose of laying the first stone of a new chapel-of-ease at Pen-y-common, in that parish. Miss Morgan of Pant-y-goytre, the foundress, expressed a desire that he should be engaged for this duty. I was made the channel of communicating her wishes to him. He sent a short note to me in reply, that he little thought of being selected for such an office of honour, but that as it had been desired, he would make a point of attending for the purpose. He came to me on the 31st of October (1848), and on the following morning accompanied me and part of my family to Llangibby. I need not describe the earnestness and devotion which were apparent in his manner of discharging the duty assigned to him, for you witnessed

it on a similar occasion at Llangattock. After the ceremony we all adjourned to the house of Mr. Williams (Llangibby Castle). A party of twelve or fourteen assembled in the drawing-room. When luncheon was announced, it was with some difficulty that James Davies was prevailed upon to accompany us to the dining-room; and it was not until young Williams returned to the room which we had just left, and urged him, that he joined us, and took his place among the rest at the 'Squire of Llangibby's hospitable board.

I was much struck by the unaffected ease and propriety with which he conducted himself throughout the day, though in a position somewhat strange to him. He took his part in the conversation with readiness, neither talking too much nor being too silent; and the good sense as well as the piety of his remarks could not but be observed. We returned home soon after it grew dark, and James Davies passed the rest of the evening with my servants, who were all much attached to him; (he used to stay the night here on his way to and from Devauden,) and they entertained him with singing psalms, which pleased him greatly. He said he had seldom passed a happier day, but added, now he had seen (at Llangibby) 'how the great people lived, he thanked God the more that he was a man of low estate.' The words of Scripture, 'They that honour me I will honour,' came forcibly into my mind, in connexion with the proceedings of that day.

A passage in the foregoing narrative suggests one of the most prominent of the old man's characteristics—a dread of the world, its fashions, riches, and honours. Better, he used to say, to be called self-willed than worldly-minded. His Lord and Master had said, 'Woe unto you

that are rich! for ye have received your consolation :’ and the old disciple proclaimed the like warning to all who delight in those splendours, and give themselves up to those fashions and amusements, for which, more often than for their own sake, riches are sought. How thoroughly that temper is displayed in the following letter, of which a draft was found amongst his papers!

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Since I was last at your house, I have suffered a great deal on your account. After going home that night, my mind was so distressed, I had almost a sleepless night: and since I have had several waking hours in bed, in thinking on you. I did by no means expect to find at your house so much grandeur, so much gentee and fashionable business, and you yourself so busily engaged in it; if I had, I should not have taken such liberties, and have made myself so free as I have done. No; I thought you were the humble self-denying follower of the Saviour. Having found the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price, you had sold all you had to purchase them—that is, having found the Saviour, you had given up all for his sake. Then judge what was my surprise and disappointment to find you engaged in the follies and fashions and customs of a vain world. You mentioned you thought to come to me at Christmas. If the weather will admit, I shall be going from home, and I should be sorry for you to have a waste journey. It is my wish you would never give yourself any trouble, nor put yourself to any inconvenience on my account; for I am very ill qualified to keep company with the fashionable and grand.

Rather than I should seek the praise of the world, or even desire it, or follow the fashions and customs of it, the love and use of grandeur, in order to exalt myself, and desire the praise and favourable opinion of poor sinners, such as I am—rather than this, let me be despised by you, and by all the world; let me, in the opinion of all, sink into my true character, the character that I appear in the sight of a true, a holy, and a just and righteous God. And what is that character?—a poor, vile, miserable, unworthy sinner—a little polluted crawling dust and ashes. All we have is contained in the publican's prayer,—‘God be merciful to me, a sinner.’ Yes; the free, the rich, and undeserved mercies of God in Christ Jesus. After this confession, I dare not subscribe myself your friend; but I feel affection and kindness in my heart for you, and I pray God you may find mercy in that day.

I remain, your very humble servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

His rigid practice of the virtue of self-denial, and the narrow limits within which he supplied himself with things necessary for even the simplest tastes, in order that he might be able to relieve the wants of others, made him a severe censor in an age of unexampled luxury; and led him to regard as sinful, those costly dresses and expensive habits, which were once the distinction of a limited class, but are now prevalent amongst all classes, except the very lowest.

On the opening of Whitebrook Chapel, several years ago, there was a large congregation, which

included a goodly number of ladies, dressed, doubtless, as is their custom on occasions of ceremony. James Davies attended the morning service, but disappeared suddenly at the close, and was not present at the evening service. The reason for his absence being sought, it was discovered that he had been much shocked at the appearance of some of the ladies, and had hastened home, in order that he might not again be pained by seeing Christian worshippers attired in a manner which he thought unseemly in God's house.

He subscribed to a publication called *The Friendly Visitor*, and was much interested by an article in one of the numbers of that periodical, called, 'An Address to those who have resigned themselves to God and his inwardly hidden life.'

That Address seemed to him to contain, in a short compass, the religion that the Saviour of the world and his Apostles taught by precept and example, and he printed five hundred copies for gratuitous distribution.

The condemnations of a secular spirit, contained in the following passages of that Address, commended it in an especial manner to his approval.

If others serve God and Mammon at the same time, and, whilst professing to be pious, are seeking and laying up treasures on earth by engaging in extensive secular concerns, let us look unto Him who said to His disciples—‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.’ And remember that if the former be Israelites, we ought to be Levites—a royal priesthood, concerning whom God has said, ‘Ye shall possess nothing in the land, nor have any portion amongst them, for I am your portion and your inheritance.’ We must show that we are dead to the world, and look no longer at the things that are seen; because our lives are hid with Christ in God, and our world and wealth-denying walk must proclaim in a loud voice unto all men, ‘God alone is sufficient.’ If others follow their sensual appetites, and spend and misspend their valuable time in the variety and beauty of their dress, and in adorning their houses and furniture, and apply so much valuable attention to the ease and enjoyment of their vile bodies, it is for us to show that we are not sensual, nor animal, but spiritual men, who no longer live after the flesh, but after the spirit, and do not seek whilst here to lie upon roses and be at ease, when our Head and Forerunner was born in a stable, cradled in a manger, crowned with thorns, and died upon the cross.

Amongst the works of Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, is a discourse on the life hidden in God; being an exposition of the words of St. Paul, ‘For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory’ (Col. iii. 3, 4.) The Gallican bishop,

like the humble village teacher, exclaimed, 'Let us fly, let us fly the world, and all that is in the world, for it is only corruption! Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.'

The example of James Davies was in harmony with his theory. He really trusted in God. The £100 which was presented to him by Dr. Warneford had been lent to a farmer, from whom he required no security. He had undertaken his labours at Llangattock, on the assurance that he should receive an instalment of £20 each year; and when his debtor pleaded inability to make the first payment at the appointed time, he wrote to him the following letter:—

May 16, 1849.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You know that I have done everything in my power to oblige you. My money was left in your hands for three years, because I thought that in that time you would so far have recovered in circumstances that you could, without difficulty, pay me. And desiring still to make it as easy as possible to you, I determined to receive £20 yearly until it was paid. Under this impression I have undertaken the school at Llangattock, without any salary whatever. I have no money at all. All my dependence for support

is from my money in your hands. Now, I hope you will provide £20 for me the 18th of next month, for the first year, which I have reckoned to begin from Christmas last. I hope and trust you will by no means make me uncomfortable in my old age. I remain, my dear friend, yours sincerely,

JAMES DAVIES.

At the date of this letter, the old man's resources were reduced to a few shillings; and he would soon have been dependent on charity for his support, but that a gentleman appeared unexpectedly at the school with £2, which he had been commissioned to give him. Although he resolved to devote that sum to charitable objects, and not to the relief of his own wants, he employed a portion of it for his support until Midsummer, when an instalment of the loan of £100 was paid him; and the debtor's promissory note given for the balance. A friend, whose judgment he respected, then advised him to require some security for the balance, or, if he would not do this, to have the note signed by the debtor in the presence of a witness. His answer was, 'God has never suffered me to want yet, and I feel sure He will not forsake me now: it never gives me a moment's uneasiness.'

The following letter was addressed to his sister and her grandson, on the death of that sister's daughter, and shows his sense of the

good which his labours were already effecting at Llangattock :—

Llangattock, March 19th, 1849.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I am truly sorry to hear of your daughter's death. We can place no dependence upon anything but upon the Eternal God. I have been at Llangattock since the beginning of November last. I had yesterday thirty-five children in our Sunday-school and at church; and such a thing as a Sunday-school, and so many children at church, was never known at Llangattock. The congregation is increased, and, with humility, I hope God is putting his blessing on the undertaking, so that it is and will continue a blessing to this parish and neighbourhood. I am truly glad to hear from Mr. Newell; God Almighty bless him; please to give my sincere love to him.

My dear sister, I remain your brother,

JAMES DAVIES.

MY VERY DEAR HENRY,

I greatly you you in your distress. Is this not a warning to us to be always ready and prepared for death? Please to remember me to your father. Wishing you, my dear Henry, health and happiness,

I remain, your Uncle,

JAMES DAVIES.

The following letter was written to a young friend, who was in delicate health, and for whom he had conceived a strong affection :—

Llangattock-Lingoed, April 27, 1849.

DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

Most sincerely do I wish you health and every happiness, and although we may not at all times enjoy our health, and may have less comfort than some others, God has promised that all things shall work together for

good to them that love Him. You do put your trust in God, and He will never fail you. No one ever trusted in Him, and has been disappointed. Most assuredly afflictions are grievous and distressing, but how much better to suffer than to be given up to forgetfulness of God, and be suffered to sin against Him, and His anger and just displeasure to fall upon us. Dear Miss Matthews, all that we can suffer in the present world will soon be over, but the glories of heaven will never end. I pray God Almighty comfort and support you under every trial and distress. I wish your father success in all his undertakings, but we are placed in a world of difficulties, and nothing can be depended upon but God only.

I have a very good attendance of children on week days and Sundays, and they attend regularly at church. So far it is well, and I wish I could say that most of them did truly fear God. I have faithfully done what I could to impress upon their minds their duty to the God of heaven, but I fear little good has been done. Please to give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, and to your sisters, and I remain,

Your much obliged and very humble Servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

The profanation of the Lord's day, by farm labourers and others, caused him deep pain, and led to the following notice, which he was prevailed on to withhold from publication by the advice of others, who undertook to employ their influence to put down a sinful custom, which occasioned the old man much distress :—

Whereas it has been represented to me that there are certain persons in the parish of Llangattock-Lingoed

who are carrying guns and killing game on the Lord's day,—I do most earnestly and affectionately desire such persons to consider the greatness of the crime they are guilty of, in breaking the laws of the land, and thereby subjecting themselves to a heavy fine or imprisonment; and further to consider how they will answer the Almighty God for breaking his commandment, and bidding defiance to his authority. They are therefore requested to leave off a practice that cannot fail of being most injurious to themselves; but if, after this notice is given, this practice shall be continued, any person giving such information so that he or they so offending be lawfully convicted, shall receive a reward of one Guinea on application to me.

In a letter addressed to his sister from the Devauden, in 1847, he mentioned a grandson of his elder brother, who was a person of some property, and kept a public house in the village of Llangattock.

The following letter, written under the signature of 'a friend,' was addressed to his relative, and posted at Chepstow, but did not reach its destination until after the old man's death. Being shown to Mr. Rodney, it was discovered by him to be in the old man's hand-writing:—

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Let me most earnestly beg of you to inquire most seriously and carefully, are you prepared for death, judgment, and eternity? Now, my dear friend, be not offended with me, for what I have further to say; it is intended for your benefit, not for my advantage. First of all, you very seldom go to

church, you suffer people to drink in your house until they are most shamefully drunk, and, if we hear what is true, you drink with them, until you are in the same state. Now, my dear friend, you are doing to yourself the most serious injury, as well as to the neighbourhood and its inhabitants; encouraging vice and wickedness, and sin of almost every description. And this is no doubt assisting Satan to murder and destroy precious souls, that God's eternal Son shed his precious blood to redeem. Christ Jesus came into the world to save your soul. He groaned, bled, and died for you: and is this the return you make for all his love and pity for you? But you get money by doing this. Ah! my dear friend, when you come to die, and enter the eternal world, what will money do for you? You must die, prepared or not prepared. My dear friend, let me earnestly entreat you never to let any person get drunk in your house; keep no late hours; keep holy the Sabbath; manage your business in the fear of God, and according to the will of God. But, you will say, how will the profit and getting of money come in? My dear friend, the favour of Almighty God, an interest in Christ Jesus, and to be an heir of glory, are more valuable than all the riches of this world; and they that trust in the Lord and serve him, will never fail nor want a support in this world. Most earnestly do I beg you to take into your most serious consideration these few hints, and I remain, most sincerely your well-wisher,

A FRIEND.

The old schoolmaster's inquiry of his relative, what money would do for him when he should come to die; and whether he would sacrifice for money the favour of Almighty God, recalls a passage in Jeremy Taylor's *'Holy Living and Dying.'*

When a sadness lies heavy upon thee, remember that thou art a Christian designed to the inheritance of Jesus; and what dost thou think concerning thy great fortune—thy lot and portion of eternity? Dost thou think thou shalt be saved or damned? Indeed, if thou thinkest thou shalt perish, I cannot blame thee to be sad till thy heart-strings crack; but then why art thou troubled at the loss of thy money? What should a damned man do with money, which, in so great a sadness, it is impossible for him to enjoy? Did ever any man upon the rack afflict himself because he had received a cross answer from his mistress? or call for the particulars of a purchase upon the gallows? If thou dost really believe thou shalt be damned, I do not say it will cure the sadness of thy poverty, but it will swallow it up. But if thou believest thou shalt be saved, consider how great is that joy, how excellent is the recompense for all the sufferings in this world, if they were all laden upon the spirit. Here thou art but a stranger travelling to thy country, where the glories of a kingdom are prepared for thee; it is, therefore, a huge folly to be much afflicted because thou hast a less convenient inn to lodge in by the way.

In the harvest of 1849, he made his usual visit to his friend Mrs. Jones, at Hereford, and the following account of that visit has been furnished by a gentleman who then met him :—

Hereford, Feb. 22, 1850.

My personal acquaintance with James Davies was limited to a few interviews which I had with him on the occasions of his visiting Hereford, which he did several years in succession, to pay his respects to Mrs. Jones, the widow of his late minister, at St. Arvans.

But that acquaintance was sufficient to inspire me with the highest respect and esteem for him; and I shall not soon forget an evening which the good old man spent at my house on the occasion of his last visit to Hereford, in the autumn of the past year. We had much interesting and profitable conversation with him; and it was impossible not to be struck with the great simplicity and unaffected humility of his mind. He was most backward to speak of himself, and what he had done in the service of God: the servant was nothing—his Master was everything. His whole heart seemed bent on honouring his God and Saviour, and benefiting the poor and ignorant children, to whose instruction he had devoted himself.

The same self-denial which had marked him through life was still conspicuous in all his plans and designs. In speaking of his little school at Llangattock, he informed me of the kindness of a neighbouring gentleman, who had given the land for a school-house and garden; and said he had just begun to cultivate it, and intended to make it an orchard (from which he could derive no present benefit,)—‘Because, you know, Sir,’ he said, ‘that will be of use to those who may come after me.’

I was quite surprised to find the amount of general knowledge he possessed, and the clearness of mind with which he entered into and appreciated subjects of general and even scientific interest, and the progress of invention and discovery in the present day. It was evident that he had both read and thought much; and though all his opinions were expressed with the greatest diffidence, and in the most unassuming manner, yet they showed a vigour of mind, and a degree of intelligence, which I did not expect to find. In fact, his vigour, both of mind and body, was quite remarkable. He had only two days before, walked

nearly the whole distance from Llangattock to Hereford, about twenty miles, and then the next day about twelve more, to see a friend in the neighbourhood; and though almost bent double with age, he seemed equal to exertions which would have fatigued many a younger man. The last request he made me, on parting with him that evening, was, that I would assist him in endeavouring to teach his school children at Llangattock, about forty in number, a little psalmody, by supplying him with a few of the common hymn tunes in use in our churches here. Though evidently he was habitually prepared for his end, yet he did not seem at all to anticipate that his earthly course was so nearly finished; but spoke with pleasure of the work before him at Llangattock, and of repeating, if it pleased God, his visit to Hereford another year.

Before his departure on that occasion, Mrs. Jones told her humble friend she did not like his walking so far, and would willingly pay his coach-hire. He replied, 'Oh! I am very rich, and it is right you should know it. I have in my pocket £9.*'

In a letter written since his death, Mrs. Jones thus speaks of the village schoolmaster:—

Every faculty of the good old man seemed devoted to the service and glory of God. I once complained of infirmity of temper, and he wrote to request that another master might be provided for the school at the Devauden; but ever since that period he was all kindness, and proved by his obliging conduct his contrition and respect for me.

* Of this sum £8 was found at his death.

His mode of life was most abstemious, and he could seldom be prevailed upon to take meat. He often said he did not wish to take any food but what nature required, and would sometimes go without food all day, until school was over. Many to whom he was known wondered, how he could give so largely to various societies. This he did by rigid self-denial, for his income was always small, perhaps £30 a year, the larger portion of which he devoted to the spiritual welfare of his fellow-creatures; and in the great day, when he shall be called upon to give an account of the talent entrusted to him, he will be welcomed to the society of the saints in bliss with the salutation, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

On his return to Llangattock from Hereford, he wrote to Mrs. Jones the following letter:—

Llangattock-Lingoed, September 10, 1849.

HONOURED AND VERY DEAR MADAM,

I feel very little hurt with the fatigue of my journey, and was less tired than in coming to Hereford, and I was at home in very good time. I am truly thankful to you for all your kindness and charity to me, and I pray God Almighty abundantly to bless you, and in your weakness and suffering to deal tenderly with you, and strengthen and support you in every trying hour. I was very happy to meet my dear little folks, and they seemed equally pleased to see me; and one dear little fellow did all he possibly could do to show his kindness and friendship to me. He is not five years old.

Honoured Madam, I remain,
Your much obliged and very humble Servant,
JAMES DAVIES.

His school labours were again renewed, and his unwearied activity in well-doing suffered no abatement. His last earthly journey had, however, been made, and his dear little folks, as he loved to call the children of his school, were soon to lose their kind master and affectionate friend. When he re-opened the school, after his return from Hereford, no indications of failing health were visible. He always rose early, and worked until breakfast-time in the plot of ground which formed the garden of the school-house. His breakfast, which was tea, was taken at eight o'clock. This was succeeded by family prayer, which was attended by the members of the household of which he formed a part during his residence at Llangattock, and who consisted of husband and wife, with one child, a girl of ten years of age. He did not offer up extempore prayer, but used forms compiled by a clergyman, called 'The Tent and the Altar: or, Short Family Prayers for every Morning and Evening in the Week.' He likewise read a portion of Holy Scripture, selecting most commonly a chapter from the Gospels, and very generally one which described the sufferings of the Saviour. He regarded the cross as the symbol of the Christian's life, and the beloved Apostle St.

John as the purest example of the Christian pilgrim. The school was opened at nine o'clock, when a suitable prayer was read, followed by a chapter of the Bible, which he explained as he proceeded, in the plainest manner, adapting his explanations to the opening minds of his youthful flock. The chapter was chosen thus: he used a little work called 'Daily Bread: or, a Text of Scripture containing a Duty and a Promise for every Day in the Year, selected by a Lady;' and the chapter read on each morning was that in which the verse selected for the day was contained. The school hours, on week-days, were from 9 to 12 A.M., and from 2 to 5 P.M.; and as the school was a mixed one, the girls were sent on alternate afternoons to the Vicarage, where they were taught sewing by Mrs. Evans.

The Lord's-day service in the church is on the morning of one Sunday, and on the afternoon of the next. The children always assembled on that day in the school-room at 9 A.M., and were dismissed to their homes immediately after the church service, when that was in the afternoon; but when the service was in the morning, they returned to school after dinner, and were not dismissed until five o'clock.

The Sunday-school was attended by farm-

house lads and others who were not daily scholars, but the week-day scholars were required to be always present on Sunday. The rule of the school visited the neglect of Sunday attendance, by the exclusion of the offender from the day-school, for the whole of the following week. No other excuse than sickness was admitted, and there have been occasions when ten children have been refused admission for the week, because they had neglected to attend the church, and the school, on the preceding Lord's-day.

On week-day evenings he was occasionally required to visit sick persons; and he always spent his Sunday evenings amongst the cottagers, reading to and instructing the poor people,—a labour in which he was often engaged until nine o'clock. He took with him on those occasions suitable books, and when visiting the sick, was accustomed to read portions of the 'Order for the Visitation of the Sick.'

'The Dairyman's Daughter,' and 'The Young Cottager,' two works published by the Rev. Legh Richmond, were frequently his companions in the houses of the cottagers; and 'The Young Cottager' had been placed in his great-coat pocket on the last Sunday of his life.

At noon, after the children had been dismissed from the school, he withdrew daily into his own house, and there knelt alone in prayer for a quarter of an hour; and so absorbed was he on such occasions, as to be unconscious of the presence of persons, who have entered to summon him to his dinner. So much of the time between twelve and two, on week-days, as was not occupied by private devotion and his dinner, and such week-day evenings as were not spent in visits to the cottagers, as well as his morning hours before breakfast, were employed in his garden, where he might be seen hard at work, often without hat or coat.

He had planted many fruit-trees in the garden, and frequently expressed anxiety to increase its value for his successor; and he had resolved to plant the ground with potatoes, for distribution in the relief of such of the cottagers as might require assistance of that kind.

On two days of the week his dinner consisted of bread and cheese alone; but on the remaining days he ate meat. Puddings when sent him he never ate, but gave away, thinking it a needless pampering of the flesh to eat more than one description of food, whether meat, or bread and cheese, at his noontide meal. Abstinence from

animal food on two days of each week, he thought conducive to health, and serviceable to digestion, which in him was feeble. Beer he could never drink without inconvenience. As a remedy for flatulence, the form of indigestion from which he suffered, the occasional use of gin had been recommended to him; but his entire supply during the year he spent at Llangattock was limited to one pint. Divine service was performed in the parish church of Langattock on Wednesdays in Lent, and this service he attended throughout the only season of Lent which he spent at that place. On that day he took no food of any kind between breakfast and supper. The latter, which was his third meal, always consisted of bread and milk. Before nine o'clock family worship was performed, when he read, as in the morning, a portion of holy Scripture, and the appropriate prayer for the day from the 'Tent and the Altar;' and at nine he always withdrew to his own room for the night. The holy communion was administered at Llangattock, at the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, as well as at Michaelmas and he partook of that sacrament for the last time on the 23rd September, 1849.

Although it is not certainly known when the

following paper was written, yet it would seem to have been begun shortly before his death, with a view to publication ; and to have been left in the unfinished state in which it was found after his death, in his own handwriting.

Having felt something of the realities of eternity and the misery of my own situation, were I to appear before the Almighty with my sins unpardoned ; should death meet me in this state, what would be the horrors and anguish of my mind ! To reflect that the work my Creator sent me into the world to do is undone ; that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, but that I refused to be saved by Him ; that now the day of grace is past, and the door of hope for ever closed against me ; that once I enjoyed precious time wherein I might have sought the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, truly repented of my sins, have worked out my own salvation with fear and trembling, and through His strength that is made perfect in weakness, might have glorified my God by an holy and obedient life ; but now these precious opportunities are lost for ever ; time, so rich and so valuable is gone by ; death stares me in the face, and now nothing remains for me but a fearful looking for of judgment, with all the horrors and miseries of the never-ending world. These are weighty reflections ; they were once mine, and if it is now otherwise, it is of God's infinite mercy and unbounded goodness, and his compassion that fails not. From these considerations, and what is continually passing in the world, and in our own happy country—a country where we see the goodness and mercy of God showered down upon us, in an abundant manner. We have choice blessings, choice opportunities, of knowing our duty to our Almighty Creator : His holy and blessed word is put

into our hands, or within the reach of the poorest. We have ministers to instruct us, and the purest and holiest Church (I believe in the world) open to receive us—where the Gospel is preached to us in its purity. We have the wisest and best of instruction in a variety of methods; and do we see these mercies improved as they ought to be? Far from it. Do we not see iniquity abound, sins of almost all descriptions practised, the precious Saviour undervalued and neglected, and the things that belong to our everlasting peace set at nought. And even among the professors of religion, how many are there that walk by faith, that have their conversation in heaven, that deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ? From these considerations I feel an earnest desire to lay before my readers the necessity of a holy life; and, my dear friends, if I have any hope that the Saviour of the world is the Saviour of my soul—if I have any well-grounded hope that I shall find mercy in that day, with my whole soul I desire that these blessings and mercies may become yours. I am now on the very edge of the grave and on the borders of the eternal world, and shortly shall I appear before the Great Judge of heaven and earth, in whose presence I am, and to whom I appeal, that, in this undertaking, I shall not lay before my readers any precept or command, nor any duty; but that it is my earnest endeavours and desire to practise it myself.

The draft of the following letter, written on Saturday afternoon, the 29th September,—being less than forty-eight hours before the old man's last illness, was found on his slate after his death, and is the last known production of his pen or pencil :—



Llangattock-Lingoed, Sept. 29, 1849.

VERY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

It is very kind of you to write to me, and I cannot express how much I esteem and value you, for the truly Christian manner you express yourself. I pray God Almighty abundantly to bless you; I am truly glad to hear you are better, and I hope you will yet be restored to the full enjoyment of health. I am sorry to hear Mr. Matthews is poorly and has met with difficulties, but we are in a difficult world, and at best it is not our rest. I am exceedingly glad I am come to Llangattock; I believe no place has been more neglected, or is at the present time in a more unchristian state; it is the very poor that have anything like the fear of God. The dear children behave better than I could have expected, and I have them at church every Sunday, and I hope God will bless the endeavour to teach them to love and fear Him, and I hope they will be useful to their parents. There is a new house and school built, and a prospect that it will be supported; I hope it will be a lasting benefit to the place. There is an acre of land given to it, and I am doing all I can to improve it. A gentleman settles five pounds a-year on it for ever, and there is five pounds a-year to it besides, and they intend raising a subscription for it. I am very well in health, and very happy; I have lately been to Hereford to see Mrs. Jones, and I walked there, a distance of seventeen miles. Please to remember my kind love to all your family, and I remain your much obliged and very humble servant,

JAMES DAVIES.

It has been already mentioned, that the portion of Scripture read by him in family worship was ordinarily a chapter from the Gospels; but a few

days before his death he began the Epistle to the Romans, with which he proceeded continuously until Sunday, the 30th September. When the service was an afternoon one in the church, he always read, as a portion of the family worship in the evening, the Epistle and Gospel for the day, in order, as he said, that this portion of the service of that day might not be lost. On such occasions it was not his custom to read any other portion of Scripture, but on the evening of the last Sunday of his life, he added to the Epistle and Gospel for that day the lesson appointed in the Office for the Burial of the Dead, taken out of the 15th chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Although to the watchful eyes of his kind friends there was nothing to indicate a speedy death, the old man's thoughts were obviously directed to his own mortality; and before he took leave of his household companions on this his last Sabbath upon earth, he said to them—
'What I should like to have placed over my remains when I am taken away, is a plain stone, with the two letters of my name, my age, and the year of my death.'

The next morning he rose early, and worked as usual in his garden until the hour of breakfast, when he returned to the house and partook

of his simple fare. The little family with whom he dwelt, all of whom had conceived for him the warmest affection, then assembled to worship with him for the last time; and the aged servant of Jesus Christ opened the book of life, at the last chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine. He read with deep solemnity, and with an earnestness which will be long remembered by his hearers, the closing chapter of that mysterious book; and when he arrived at the 17th verse, he repeated three times the words, 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' The closing verse contains the apostolical benediction, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen;' which having repeated, he closed the book. For him revelation had come to an end, and the canon of Scripture was finished. Holding the book closed, he repeated with solemn impressiveness several times, the words of the 20th verse—'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' This was a remarkable scene. Twelve years before, in the self-same month, he had watched by the death-bed of William James, and heard

the dying boy exclaim, 'Oh, Father! there is the Lord Jesus Christ; help me to go and meet him!' The old man's reflections on that occasion were given in the following words:—'I have no doubt but the glorious messengers sent from heaven were then appearing before him.'

The labours of our humble friend had not, however, come to an end, and he was once more to meet those, whom he used to call his dear little ones. Having begun his school labours by a prayer for God's blessing, he opened his little book called 'Daily Bread;' the day was Monday, the first of October, and the passage allotted for the day is taken from the 20th and 21st verses of the 3rd chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians:—

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

The entire chapter was then read to the school, with appropriate explanations, and the work of the day proceeded as usual. It was nearly two o'clock when he returned to the house, and ate heartily a dinner of stewed meat, which had been prepared for him. He

very soon complained of being unwell, and requested Mrs. Evans to go to the school-room and dismiss the children until the morning, when, if it pleased God, he would be with them again; and he desired her not to detain the girls, whom, in the usual course, she would have then taught to sew, because he wished her to be near him. He complained of flatulence, and as this was sometimes relieved by a small quantity of gin, he was prevailed upon to take a little. But the pain in his stomach, which was severe, was not lessened by that remedy, and he took a little brandy, after which he seemed to suffer less.

He went to bed at three o'clock in the afternoon, and complained of pain throughout the evening and night. He would not submit to the visit of a medical man, but used to say, when his time was come he should depart. Mrs. Evans proposed to send to Mr. Rodney, who, as well as Mrs. Rodney, was ever ready to contribute to his comfort, and had affectionately ministered to his wants during his residence at Llangattock; but this he would not allow her to do, saying that Mr. Rodney would be sure to send for a doctor. Still urged by Mrs. Evans, he became angry; but at length, wishing to

appease her anxiety on his account, he gave her permission to send for Mr. Rodney in the morning, should he not then be better. He told her that there was a sum of £8 in his pocket, and a promissory note for £80 in his box, which, in case of his death, he wished her to deliver to Mr. Rodney. After midnight he complained of much pain at the shoulder and back of the neck, and said to Evans, who was then with him, 'A death-bed repentance is a poor preparation for eternity. How could I make my peace with God, if I had neglected the concerns of my soul until racked with sickness?'

About two in the morning of the 2nd October, his pains seemed to increase, and he desired that warm water should be provided for his feet; which being done, he got out of bed, bathed and wiped his feet without assistance, and returning into bed, was dead in a quarter of an hour. He was sensible to the last, and having solicited the prayers of his kind attendants, repeated the words, 'God Almighty pity me!' and fell asleep in Jesus whom he loved.

He came to his grave in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh in its season; and who, that has witnessed the close of such a life, would not exclaim with the prophet, 'Let me die the

death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!' Truly has the Psalmist said, 'The end of the upright man is peace.'

In the pocket of the waistcoat which he last wore were found the following lines:—

Washed, saved, redeemed by God's eternal Son,
His latest moments proved the victory won;
Joyful His spirit soared from earth, to raise
Unceasing anthems to his Saviour's praise.

The following description of his life at Llangattock is given in the words of Mrs. Evans:—

His whole delight was in doing good—visiting the poor, and relieving their wants in food, clothes, and money. To some of them he even gave his shirts to be cut up for their children, at the same time supplying money to purchase for them shoes, in order that they might come to school. Even out of his limited income he clothed some who were of age to go to service, and provided food to enable the poor to go out to glean. It may truly be said of him, 'he made the widow's heart to sing for joy.' Indeed, his charity was unbounded. His Sabbaths were spent in giving religious instruction to the Sunday-school children, about forty in number; and the Sabbath before his death he was seen stooping down his head to the little ones, who raised up their mouths to kiss him.

His remains were placed in a plain coffin, and beneath his head were placed the smock-frock and small red waistcoat of William James; and when the school children were admitted on the morn-

ing of the funeral into the chamber of death, they perceived no change of expression in the features of the kind friend whom they had lost. On the coffin-lid was a plate inscribed thus :— ‘ James Davies, died Oct. 2nd, 1849, aged 84 years.’ The day of his funeral was of that summer character which we love in autumn. Gentle and simple assembled to honour the memory of a good man ; and whilst the children he had taught and the poor he had visited knelt around his grave, the sun shone brightly on the village churchyard. The following account of his funeral was furnished to a local paper by Archdeacon Crawley :—

The late James Davies, of Devauden.

On Saturday last, the remains of this excellent old man were committed to the ground in the churchyard at Llangattock-Lingoed, in a spot on the north side of the church, which had been selected for the purpose by himself.

It was very gratifying to observe the genuine tokens of respect and affection for his memory, and unfeigned sorrow for his loss, which met the eye on every side of the churchyard, where many of the inhabitants of the parish, and others from a distance, had assembled to attend his funeral. He had not resided in that place more than a year, but his readiness to do good, and his uniform kindness, especially to the little children of his school, whom he had taught gratuitously, had already won for him the esteem and love of his neighbours.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, LINCOLN

Aged women were seen with tears in their eyes, speaking of such traits of his goodness as had fallen under their own observation ; and others, less advanced in years, with infants in their arms, were telling of the loss their elder children had sustained in the death of their kind and patient teacher ; while among the children themselves, many could not restrain the more open expression of their grief, but were observed to shed tears of genuine sorrow when reminded by what was going on around them that they should see his face no more.

There were few of the ordinary trappings of mourning, but there were evidences of real grief, which could not be mistaken ; there was, besides, no doubtful tribute of high esteem for his truly Christian character, and long and self-denying services, in the presence at his burial of many who could have had little personal acquaintance with him, and scarcely any other interest in his memory than that which they felt to be justly due to his piety and sterling worth.

The corpse was met at the entrance of the churchyard by the Rev. John Price, the curate of the parish. Four of the principal farmers had offered themselves as bearers. The pall which covered the bier on which the remains were carried to the grave, was borne by the Hon. W. P. Rodney, Sir Thomas Phillips, Iltud Nicholl, Esq., and Archdeacon Crawley ; while ten of the clergy of the diocese, viz., the Revs. F. C. Steele (rural dean), William Price (rural dean), Thomas Williams (Abergavenny), Thomas Morgan, Theophilus Morgan, A. M. Wyatt, S. C. Baker, P. J. Lewis, Wm. Gray, and H. O. Crawley, followed as mourners ; many of whom had come from some distance, and all with the desire to pay a marked tribute of respect and veneration for the character of one, who, though poor in this world, and of low degree, was yet rich in faith, and high in all that really elevates one man above another.

After the solemn and consolatory service of the church had been concluded at the grave, many of those who had assembled around it withdrew to the school-room, in which, but five days before, the good old man had been teaching the children whom he loved—and there a plan was proposed, which it is hoped will result in the permanent endowment of the school; the chief object for which, at eighty-three years of age, he had removed from the Devauden, and which to his dying hour was almost the only earthly wish which lay unaccomplished near his heart.

To make a beginning at Llangattock-Lingoed, and then to die, was the consummation for which he looked when he quitted the Devauden; and like the aged Simeon, he was ready to depart, could he be assured that the school which bore his name would be carried on after his days.

To promote that object, he signed, on the 20th day of August, 1848, the following will and minute, which were prepared at his request:—

This is the last Will and Testament of me, James Davies, of Devauden, in the parish of Newchurch, in the county of Monmouth, schoolmaster. I give and bequeath unto the Venerable William Crawley, Archdeacon of Monmouth, all my money, goods, chattels, and effects, and all the property of which I shall be possessed and to which I may be entitled at the time of my death. And I appoint the Honourable William Powell Rodney, of Llanvihangel-Court, in the parish

of Llanvihangel-Crucorney, sole Executor of this, my Will and Testament.*

To the Venerable William Crawley, Archdeacon of Monmouth.

It is my wish and desire that the whole proceeds of my property bequeathed to you by my last will and testament, bearing date the 20th day of August, 1848, be invested by you for the better endowment of the school at Llangattock-Lingoed, called 'James Davies's School.'

JAMES DAVIES.

On the 14th October, a funeral sermon was preached in the church of Llangattock, by the curate, the Rev. John Price, from the 4th verse of the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel—'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;' in which the preacher did justice to the labours of the departed Christian, reminding his hearers that he sought the blessing of God in all he did: and that of him it might be said, with strict propriety, he went about doing good; thus guiding others by the most powerful of all teaching—the influence of good example.

A flat slab has been placed over his grave, on which is the following inscription:—

* This will was proved by Mr. Rodney, in the Consistory Court of Llandaff, on the 26th Oct., 1849.

HERE LIE THE REMAINS OF
JAMES DAVIES,
FORMERLY OF THE DEVAUDEN, AND AFTERWARDS OF THIS
PARISH,
SCHOOLMASTER,
WHO DIED OCTOBER 2ND, 1842, AGED 84 YEARS.
'LORD, NOW LETTEST THOU THY SERVANT DEPART IN PEACE,
ACCORDING TO THY WORD.'

Mention has been made of a meeting which was held in the school-room immediately after the funeral, to make arrangements for raising by subscription, such a sum of money as would ensure an adequate endowment for the school, and thus give permanence to the work for which the good old man was induced to remove from Devauden, and engage in a new field of labour when he had entered upon the 84th year of his age. From the time of that removal there remained no other work for him on earth: and those who followed him to the grave felt that in no way could the respect and veneration, which are entertained for his self-denying and exemplary character, be so appropriately expressed, as by furthering the last of the many schemes for promoting the best interest of his neighbours, which God had put into the heart of his servant; who had learned to 'look not on his own things, but also on the things of others;'

and 'to live not unto himself, but unto Him that died for us and rose again.'

The sums which have been contributed for the endowment of the school are as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|-------|----|---|
| Balance of the Building Fund . . . | £51 | 12 | 6 |
| James Davies's Gift | 74 | 6 | 9 |
| The Hon. Wm. Powell Rodney . . . | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Contributed since the founder's death . | 179 | 9 | 0 |
| | <hr/> | | |
| | £405 | 8 | 3 |

When that sum is invested, the yearly proceeds will be insufficient to secure the services of such a teacher as the trustees desire to provide, and they now ask a Christian people to bless the memory of the just, by contributing an adequate endowment for 'James Davies's School.'*

Bishop Copleston regarded with affectionate interest, the humble friend whose self-denying labours he had often encouraged, and to whose benevolent schemes he had cheerfully contributed. He had prevailed on the old man to

* Contributions to this fund will be received by the following bankers:—Messrs. Bailey and Co., Abergavenny; Messrs. Twining, 215, Strand, London; to the credit of the Hon. Wm. Powell Rodney, 'Treasurer of James Davies's School Fund.'

sit for his picture, but with difficulty, because on that, as on other occasions, he declared it to be his wish, that, when he should enter upon his rest, his name might pass away, and be no more remembered.

The anniversary meeting of the Monmouthshire district Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, was held on the 4th of October, 1849. The old man had made preparations for the journey, intimating his resolution to rise at five o'clock and walk to Usk, a distance of fifteen miles, so as to be present at eleven, when the service in the church was appointed to begin.

He expected to meet Bishop Copleston, who always presided at those anniversaries, and by whom he was sure to be welcomed with a hearty shake of the hand. Those good and great men—for to both may these terms be applied with more than ordinary significancy—were, however, not permitted to meet on this side the grave.

The bishop lay on a bed of sickness, from which he was not again to be raised, and he too entered upon his rest, in the twenty-second year of his episcopate, on the 14th day of Oct. 1849.

Some there were, that had knelt around the humble grave of the village schoolmaster, in the

churchyard of Llangattock, who, within a very few days, joined another funeral train, when the remains of one, who had borne high rule in the Church of Christ were interred within a venerable cathedral, in the presence of a large concourse of people, collected together from every part of a diocese, in which he was so loved and honoured. Again the church-bell tolled, the solemn service appointed for the burial of the dead was performed, the body was committed to the ground—earth was joined to earth—ashes to ashes—and the priest once more pronounced the sublime assurance, ‘From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.’ He had been to his flock a shepherd, so ministering discipline that he had not forgotten mercy, holding up the weak, binding together the broken, seeking the lost, and therefore it is our confident trust that when the Chief Shepherd shall come, he will receive a crown of glory which shall never fade.

Those who mourned for the humble school-master met afterwards together in the village school-room, to provide a suitable memorial for the teacher of the poor; and in like manner those who mourned for the loss of their chief

earthly pastor and spiritual head, when they departed from his grave, assembled in the cathedral chapter-room, to consider in what manner they could most appropriately commemorate the services of the accomplished scholar, the erudite theologian, and the munificent prelate. Thus, whilst the name of one will be connected with university scholarships, intended to smooth the path of the lowly-born student to academic honours; the other will be commemorated by a foundation, wherein the poor of Christ's flock will be trained up, in accordance with the solemn vows made for each of them, when they were grafted into the body of His church.

By such measures we at one and the same time further the interests of our holy religion, and promote the social and temporal advancement of the humbler classes of the community. The reformed Church of England has manifested her willingness to promote every increase of natural knowledge, because it contributes to the glory of God: and the founders of that church desired to secure to the most intelligent amongst the children of the poor, that amount and description of learning, which would afford them the surest means of advancement and distinction.

In the recent struggles for power, of a fierce democracy, we have seen the political and social institutions of neighbouring countries overthrown; and the population of great cities indebted to the sword, for that protection which the laws could no longer afford. The levelling tendencies of modern democracy, by which those convulsions were brought about, can be eradicated only by moral agencies, which will reform what is amiss, and not destroy, alike, the good and the evil.

We would cultivate fraternity, but it should be the brotherhood of a common Christianity; and would promote equality, but it should be sought in the advancement of the many, and not in the depression of the few.

At the Reformation, schools and colleges were supplied by the ruling and wealthy classes of society, as ladders,—by which those who were placed by providence in humble stations, might rise to independent positions; and the poor and friendless might win honours and distinctions, which must otherwise have been confined to the rich and powerful.

May we imitate the Christian munificence of our forefathers; and whilst we preserve or restore, or, if necessary, establish, endowed grammar

schools and found college exhibitions for those amongst the children of the poor, who may be qualified, by aptitude for study, and perseverance of character, to achieve distinction in the paths of literature, or the walks of science; let us also make adequate provision in every parish, for instructing all poor children,—in the principles of the Christian religion, as it is professed and taught in the Church of England, and in such other things as may qualify them for honest employments, and prepare them fitly to do their duty in those callings, wherein they may be placed by the providence of God.

Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere seemlier now
To stop, and yield our teacher gracious thanks
For the pathetic records which his life
Hath to us given; in deeds of heartfelt truth,
Tending to patience when affliction strikes;
To hope and love; to confident repose
In God; and reverence for the dust of Man.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

There are no colours in the fairest sky
So fair as this. With moistened eye
We read of faith and purest charity.
O, could we copy his mild virtues, then
What joy to live, what blessedness to die !

SUCH was James Davies : a man who manifested the meekness of disposition, and purity of heart, and practised the simple and severe virtues of the primitive Christians, in an age, remarkable for the eager pursuit of wealth, for an ostentatious display of personal indulgences, and for a surrender of the powers of the body, and the faculties of the mind, to the attainment of transient distinctions, or short-lived gratifications.

By the observance of a very frugal diet, into which meat entered but sparingly ; and by abstaining, except on rare occasions, from all other beverages than tea, milk, and water,—a body naturally infirm and feeble, was preserved in health and usefulness beyond the allotted years

of man. By unremitting attention to the duties of his humble calling; by allotting to every hour its appropriate employment, in which frequent bodily labour was included; and by the exercise of a strict economy, and a rigid self-denial,—he was enabled to contribute largely to all objects of Christian benevolence. He bestowed upon others wine and clothing, supplied at an advanced age for the relief of his own necessities, by friends who observed the want of such comforts under the pressure of bodily weakness; and books given him as tokens of affection and respect, were either lent or given away, in order that by their circulation amongst the poor, the good instruction they contained might be spread abroad.

But although he was habitually employed in some one or other of those acts of mercy which adorn the Christian character, his peculiar delight was to train the young in the ways and works of godliness; and to this duty nearly forty years of his life were devoted. He was the disciple of that Master who called a little child unto him, and said, ‘Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.’ And again, ‘Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.’

As a pedlar, walking from house to house, and town to town, there was about him an elevation of character, the result of Christian teaching. As a tradesman, exposing his scanty collection of wares at the open windows of a small shop, he was distinguished by his upright dealings, his simple-hearted benevolence, and the extent of his charities to the poor. As a teacher, he manifested a solemn sense of the importance of his office, and of the reality of that future for which he was training the children of the poor.

He was imbued with the spirit of the angelic hymn—‘Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will toward men:’ and he remembered, that those glad tidings were proclaimed to the poor of this world. Of all the dangers of our present state, that which he most often denounced, was a worldly-minded temper; and he taught, by precept and example, that the friendship of the world is enmity towards God.

He often repeated the emphatic warnings of Scripture, ‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.’ ‘For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ ‘Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.’

He sought not his own advancement. The first strongly-marked act of his life was the abandonment of a calling which promised worldly success, and the choice of the humble vocation of a village weaver. When he offered his services as school-teacher at Usk, with a stipend of £30, he resigned the business of his shop. When again he proceeded to the Devauden, he relinquished a certain stipend of £30, in order to accept one of £20, raised with difficulty, and often irregularly paid : and at the close of life he forsook the Devauden, for his last charge at Llangattock ; where he laboured without wages, and provided, out of his scanty income, books and coals for his school, as well as books for circulation amongst the poor.

His charities were not limited to his own country, but he ardently sympathized in the labours of the Church, whilst providing for her children in distant lands. The extension of the Episcopate into our colonial possessions, and the erection of cathedrals to serve as Mother-churches in the distant provinces of our empire, won from him not only prayers, but gifts. Albeit, he was averse to the employment of costly ornament in the house or the service of God, he offered to Him not only of the best, but of all

that he possessed; and frugality in the employment of his slender income was manifested to increase the amount of the offering.

He was mindful of the Apostolic command—
'Let all things be done to edification.'

The infirmities of good men are regarded by the world, as occasions for malevolent and uncharitable censure, and James Davies did not escape misconstruction. Low as we are disposed to fix the standard of our own conduct, and leniently as we regard our own faults of omission and commission, we adopt a different rule, when we sit in judgment on our neighbours. Hence it arises, that we regard the failings and offences of others, even when springing from the corruptions which cling to good men, as inconsistent with the Christian profession, and as tokens of hypocritical pretension. Yet throughout the Bible history, we find in the records of the eminent and faithful servants of God, not only excellences to imitate, but errors and offences to avoid; and those things are written for our encouragement and admonition.

That in him were some things which savoured of human infirmity, may be said of James Davies, as was said by Erasmus of his friend Dr. John Colet. It is related of the Dean of St. Paul's,

that he would read that part of Erasmus's *Enchiridion*, which prescribes a remedy against anger, in order that he might the better restrain his temper. It may be said of James Davies, that he was naturally under the influence of a hasty temper, against which he earnestly struggled, and for deliverance from which he fervently prayed.

Like the royal Psalmist, he not only prayed in the evening and morning, but at noon. At mid-day, when at the Devauden, he withdrew into the vestry of the chapel ; and when at Llangattock, he entered into his closet, and having shut the door, prayed to his Father who is in secret, and who rewarded his faithful servant openly.

In him early training received its appropriate blessing. Born in sin, and by nature a child of wrath, he was made in baptism a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. The solemn exhortation then addressed to his sponsors by God's minister was not forgotten ; and he was taught by a pious mother the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, with such other things as a Christian ought to know, believe, and do, to his soul's health. Thus prepared for the rite of

confirmation, he knelt before the bishop, who, having laid his hands upon him, prayed that the Lord would defend his servant with his heavenly grace, that he might daily increase in his Holy Spirit more and more, until he should come to his everlasting kingdom.

His manhood and old age were suitable to these beginnings of his Christian life. He was a faithful member of the Church, obedient to her commands, a humble believer of her doctrines, and ever ready to aid the earnest minister of God's word, without inquiring to what, if any, party in the Church he belonged.

If the Church of England is to remain a national church, and to become a witness for the truth of God's word throughout the world,—she will owe much of her security and influence to the labours of humble, self-denying men like this village schoolmaster. At a time of divisions, characterised by harsh judgments of others, and a flattering estimate of ourselves,—when men are less solicitous to learn whether they are right than whether their neighbours are wrong,—when the humble-minded Christian is ready to exclaim, 'Oh that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest,'—it is useful to contemplate the lives and conversation

of men, who manifest their love to God by loving and serving their brethren.

The last command of the Saviour of the world to his chosen followers was to feed the lambs of his flock; and in that solemn and mysterious interview with their risen Lord, as he stood on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, it was intimated to them that their obedience to that command would afford the surest proof of their love to him.

The practical lesson to be gathered from the life of James Davies is this: that extensive usefulness does not depend upon extended means, but that moderate abilities and limited opportunities, wisely used and humbly exerted, will diffuse the most valuable blessings throughout a wide circle, and exert an influence in that circle of an enduring character. Whether the talents committed to men be many or few,—to the lowly born, as to the noble,—to the poor widow who had only two mites, as to the rich man whose barns could not contain the fruits which his ground brought forth so plentifully,—to the wise as to the foolish,—to him who is mighty in the strength of his arm as to the weak and impotent man,—to each and to all the like command is given, ‘Occupy till I come.’ Re-

sponsibility, doubtless, depends on opportunity; but the reward of him, to whom one talent only is committed, may be greater than his to whom ten are intrusted.

In that most instructive parable of the Talents, as related by St. Matthew in the 25th chapter of his Gospel, we are told by our Lord that the master of the servants gives to every man, according to his several ability: and we are thus assured that to each the appropriate means of usefulness are intrusted, which it behoves him to employ and improve. To him that duly improves God's gifts they shall be vouchsafed in increased measure; but from the idle, the slothful, and the unprofitable servant, will be taken away those means and opportunities of usefulness which, by his having wasted or misused them, he but seemed to have. Life is meant to be neither a barren nor a speculative condition; but is the season of preparation, wherein, by present usefulness, beings of an accountable character are qualified for those future rewards promised to faithful service. Those rewards are not for the disobedient; and disobedience may be manifested, not alone by the actual indulgence of vicious habits, but by indifference, by sloth, or by that languid and inactive assent to the truths of

religion, which is not followed by Christian practice. The great Exemplar and Pattern of our holy religion is exhibited to us in the Gospel,—as one who went about doing good.

James Davies rarely ventured to pronounce a judgment on the actions of others; and yet, when regarding the absence of the great and the powerful of the land, from those religious assemblies, intended to honour God by serving mankind,—even that meek and humble servant gave utterance to the reproach—‘how much do the rich and great injure themselves in not coming forward to promote the welfare of societies, whose object it is to give glory to God and do good to all mankind.’

May rich and poor, alike, hearken to the warning voice of the village schoolmaster; and, in regarding his life, may they wisely ponder on the lesson which that life conveys.

The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers;—
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts.
No mystery is here! Here is no boon
For high—yet not for low; for proudly grand—
Yet not for meek of heart.

NOTE ON LAWYERS.

(PAGES 7 AND 71.)

PREJUDICES against the practice of the law, as an employment beset with more than ordinary temptations, and unfavourable opinions of lawyers, as members of a profession peculiarly accessible to a greedy and worldly-minded temper, have extensively prevailed in the world; and these opinions and prejudices, were partaken of by James Davies. Popular dislike, is, however, the fruitful author of unjust judgments; and it is always unjust to visit the offences of individual members of a profession, upon the class, to which they belong.

I do not propose to consider, to what extent, if any, the practice of the law is unfavourable to intellectual rectitude; but, albeit not insensible to popular judgment, and although not prepared to assent to some of the conventional rules by which the English bar is regulated, I would rank highly the moral standard by which lawyers, as a body, are characterised. I believe it to be the experience of those men, who have trodden the busy highways of life, and have been jostled in their progress by the eager struggles of their fellow-men, that some of the finest characters, by which their path has been smoothed, have been found in the profession of the law. To select living names for eulogy would be invidious, and

might be unjust : and Sir Matthew Hale, in the portrait presented of him by his biographer, Bishop Burnet, from whose work some extracts shall be given, may be regarded as a model for the Christian lawyer and judge.

‘ Thus lived and died Sir Matthew Hale, the renowned lord chief justice of England. His name is scarce ever mentioned, since his death, without particular accents of singular respect. His opinion in points of law generally passes as an uncontrollable authority, and is often pleaded in all the courts of justice ; and all that knew him well, do still speak of him as one of the perfectest patterns of religion and virtue they ever saw.

‘ He took a strict account of his time, of which the reader will best judge by the scheme he drew for a diary, which I shall insert, copied from the original ; but I am not certain when he made it. It is set down in the same simplicity in which he writ it for his own private use.

‘ MORNING.

‘ 1. To lift up the heart to God in thankfulness for renewing my life.

‘ 2. To renew my covenant with God, in Christ. 1. By renewed acts of faith,—receiving Christ, and rejoicing in the height of that relation. 2. By resolutions of being one of his people, doing him allegiance.

‘ 3. Adoration and prayer.

‘ 4. Setting a watch over my own infirmities and passions, over the snares laid in our way.

‘ DAY EMPLOYMENT.

‘ There must be an employment ; two kinds.

‘ 1. Our ordinary calling, to serve God in it. It is a service to Christ, though never so mean. Coloss. iii. Here faithfulness, diligence, cheerfulness. Not to overlay myself with more business than I can bear.

‘ 2. Our spiritual employments : mingle somewhat of God’s immediate service in this day.

'REFRESHMENTS.

'1. Meat and drink ; moderation, seasoned with somewhat of God.

'2. Recreations. 1. Not our business. 2. Suitable : no games, if given to covetousness or passion.

'IF ALONE.

'1. Beware of wandering, vain, lustful thoughts : fly from thyself, rather than entertain these.

'2. Let thy solitary thoughts be profitable : view the evidences of thy salvation ; the state of thy soul ; the coming of Christ ; thy own mortality ; it will make thee humble and watchful.

'COMPANY.

'Do good to them. Use God's name reverently. Beware of leaving an ill impression, of ill example. Receive good from them, if more knowing.

'EVENING.

'Cast up the accounts of the day. If aught amiss, beg pardon. Gather resolutions of more vigilance. If well, bless the mercy and grace of God that hath supported thee.

'How strict was the account which he took of his time, may be best judged by a careful perusal of his admirable treatise on the redemption of time—one extract I cannot forbear making :

'Whatever you do, be very careful to retain in your heart a habit of religion, that may be always about you ; and keep your heart, and your life, always, as in His presence, and tending towards Him. This will be continually with you, and put itself into acts, even although you are not in a solemn posture of religious worship ; and will lend you multitudes of religious applications to Almighty God, upon all occasions and interventions ; which will not at all hinder you, in your secular occasions, but better and further you. It will make you faithful in your calling, even on account of an actual reflection of your mind, upon the presence and command of the God, whom you both fear and love. It will make you thankful for all successes and supplies ; temperate and sober

in all your natural actions ; just and faithful in all your dealings ; patient and contented in all your disappointments and crosses ; and actually consider and intend His honour in all that you do ; and it will give a tincture of devotion to all your secular employments, and turn those actions which are materially civil and natural into the very true nature of religion, and make your whole life an uninterrupted life of religion and duty to God. For this habit of piety in your soul will not lie sleeping and inactive, but, almost in every hour of the day, will put forth exertions, in short occasional prayers, thanksgivings, dependence, and resort, unto that God, who is always near you, and lodgeth, in a manner, in your heart, by His fear and love, and habitual religion towards Him. By this means, you do effectually, and in the best and readiest manner imaginable, redeem your time. This is the great art of Christian chymistry—whereby the whole course of this life becomes a service to Almighty God, an uninterrupted state of religion, the best and noblest, and most universal redemption of time.'

He continued in a judicial station, not because he loved the rank or the renown derived from office. He would have preferred, like Richard Hooker, to dwell in some quiet country place, where he might see God's blessings spring out of his mother earth, and eat his bread in peace and privacy : a place where he might, without disturbance, meditate his approaching mortality, and that great account which, at the last day, all flesh must give to the God of all spirits.

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When, during his last illness, the parochial minister offered to administer to him the holy communion in his own house, because he seemed unequal to attend the church, he answered, 'No, his heavenly Father had prepared a feast for him, and he would go to his Father's house to partake of it.' He had an especial love for Christmas-day, and as a fit expression of his joy and praise, he commonly wrote at that season a copy of verses in honour of his incarnate Lord. He died on Christmas-day, 1676, and after his death a blotted copy of verses, being a paraphrase of the song of the aged Simeon, was found amongst his papers.

Like George Herbert, Bishop Ken, and many other pious men, including the humble village schoolmaster, whose life it has been our endeavour to portray, Sir Matthew Hale, when his end was approaching, exclaimed, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.'

THE END.

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